

# LETTERS

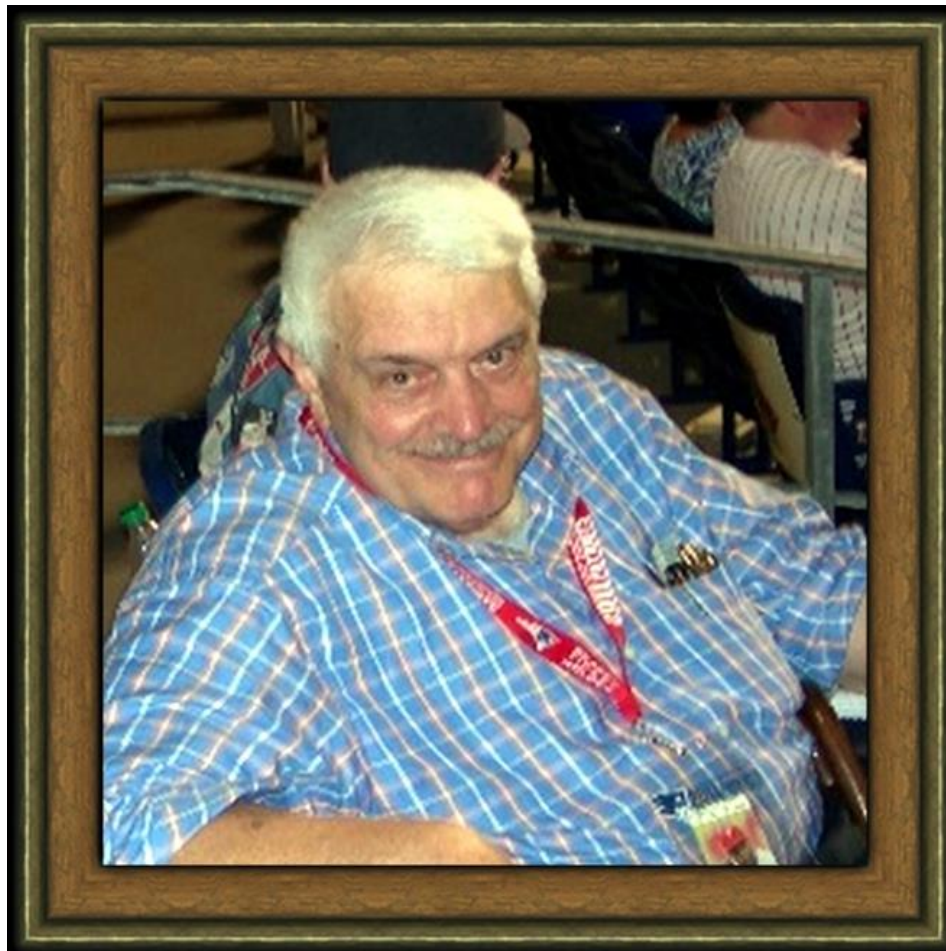
By

Jack Knarr

Dozens of letters written by noted typewriter collector Jack Knarr from 1988 to 2017

VOLUME





## PREFACE

The file you are reading is a treasure trove of handwritten and mostly typed (on old antique and vintage typewriters) letters from my old pal Jack Knarr. My name is Michael A. Brown (former long-time editor and publisher of The Typewriter Exchange Collector Newsletter) and I met Jack about 1987 and we quickly became friends in a relationship that would last 30 years until his passing in 2017. I miss him dearly, because he was a lot of fun to be around, and we shared our love for collecting typewriters. Jack was instrumental in my being able to succeed in my editorship of the hobby newsletter for 21 rewarding years.

I met Jack when I posted a "Wanted Poster" in an antique store in Lahaska, PA. Shortly after, Jack saw the poster and contacted me to ask if I would trade him for three antique typewriters that were rusty and in need of repair and supply him with three good working and restored machines. Of course, I said yes, and that was the beginning of many typewriter transactions over the years.

About this same time, I met a new typewriter collector named Curt Scaglione. The three of us all became friends and Curt assisted me in polishing up three 30s vintage Royal glass-sided typewriters that became our end of the trade.

I must note here to the reader that some of these letters contain vulgar language, and a few have adult content, so READER DISCRETION is advised.

The reader will quickly learn that Jack, while he was a great writer and storyteller, had his own style of writing and "heckling" people while doing so. But to Jack it was all in good fun because he was a gentle soul with a good and caring heart. He had honed his skills as a life-long newspaper reporter who worked for many different news outlets over his many years. He was also the Associate Editor of the Typewriter Exchange newsletter, or Typex as it was widely known.

As you will see in the letters, Jack would write to me and say, "Dear Maggot Face," or "You Wacko," and "Sweet Mother of God."

Then he would address letters to my company as "Stench Typewriter Co." which was really Steck Typewriter Co. Or another company I owned was called Business Machine Repair and he would address it as "Business Machine Ripoff."

But it was all in good fun! Jack never wished ill will on anyone, in fact, he would routinely go out of his way to help people, not only financially but with personal problems and counseling them.

He was a good listener and avid reader.

Fast forward to 2023 and while reviewing the Typex archives a decision was made by Curt Scaglione and myself that these letters should be enjoyed by the typewriter collector community and the rest of the world. We reasoned that this would be a great tribute to Jack Knarr and help to keep his legacy alive.

They are also a "window" into the life and thoughts of an avid typewriter collector and the workings of a long and fruitful friendship. Why not share this with the world?

My longtime dear friend Curt Scaglione has been kind enough to scan all these many letters and post them on his website at <http://officemuseum.online>

Sometime soon we hope to publish these letters on the ARCHIVE.ORG website.

E N J O Y,

Michael A. Brown and Curt Scaglione

Comments, questions, or corrections can be directed to:

Typex1@aol.com or mystaplers2010@yahoo.com

By JODINE MAYBERRY |

PUBLISHED: January 12, 2018

It used to be that if you were a journalist, you couldn't count on great pay or an adequate pension, but you could count on a great obituary written by one of your friends in the business.

That isn't true anymore in this age of obituaries paid for by your family as part of your funeral costs.

Take this death notice published July 18, 2017, in the Tampa Bay Times:

Knarr, John Curtis, passed July 11, 2017. Survived by sons, John Earl William Knarr, Frank J. Knarr; brother, Lenny; sister, Debbie.

That's it. That's the only published notice or obituary I can find for my friend of 49 years, a man who had been a newspaper reporter all his life, working at papers up and down the East Coast.

We worked together at the Daily Times' sister paper, the Trentonian, in Trenton, N.J., for 12 years, where he was one of the most colorful staffers ever.

Jack was most often assigned to the police beat but his great love was writing features and columns on ordinary people.

He was a big man, and he had a big heart. People knew that about him, and they flocked to him. Weird people, down-and-out people, working-class people. They sensed Jack cared about them.

He was weird, himself. When he was young, he looked like the actor Omar Sharif, but he never took that seriously.

He was loud and boisterous and always fun to be around.

Whenever his desk phone rang, he'd shout out, "Yes, Mother!" or sometimes "It's a nightmare!" remembered his longtime friend and former colleague David Neese.

Then he would cackle maniacally.

For a while at the Trentonian, Jack moonlighted as a live-in cemetery caretaker and often spent his nights sitting on a bench in front of the cemetery, talking to the people who happened by.

One Saturday Jack was working police and I was the weekend city editor.

I was waiting anxiously for three stories from him half an hour before deadline while one of his cemetery buddies, obviously distressed, sat next to his desk talking earnestly to him.

I yelled over to Jack to try to get him to wind down the conversation, but he waved me off.

Then he suddenly jumped up and raced into the men's room to grab some wet paper towels.

The man had slit his wrists and was bleeding all over the newsroom floor!

It turned out the visitor had just lost his wife and had come to Jack in his grief and despair.

On another day, the police radio announced that a man with a rifle had taken hostages at a local bar.

Jack quickly called the bar and was surprised to end up talking to the hostage taker himself.

For over an hour, Jack stayed on the phone with the man, listening to his tale of woe. He finally talked the man into handing the rifle to a barmaid and surrendering to police waiting outside.

During the standoff, the guy tried to talk Jack into meeting him face to face.

"Go down there? Hell no. You're crazy and you have a gun," Jack told him.

The police were just a little miffed (Mt. St. Helens volcanic) when they learned that the reason they couldn't call the bar and talk to the hostage taker was that Jack was tying up the line.

After that, word got out on the street that Jack was the person to surrender to in Trenton.

One of those who did was an ax murderer (really) who had been let out of prison on work release and assigned to gardening work at the New Jersey governor's mansion.

The parolee had gotten into some new trouble – I think he murdered a drinking buddy.

So, he called Jack and arranged to meet him at a restaurant, someplace public where the police couldn't shoot him on sight. Jack soon talked him into surrendering to FBI agents who were waiting, and eating, at a nearby table.

Jack collected old manual typewriters and, when he could afford it, old cars. For a few years, one of his old cars was a hearse.

When he worked at the Washington Times, "the Moonie paper" owned by the Rev. Sun Myong Moon, Jack was living in the hearse in the paper's parking lot.

One day, according to Jack, the employees were told to keep their cars out of the parking lot as Moon was coming to inspect the premises.

But Jack's hearse wouldn't start and the next morning, he found himself sitting in the hearse in the middle of a totally empty lot as Moon's entourage passed by.

He was soon gone from that paper.

He also got fired from the Burlington County Times when, as Jack told the story, he failed to show up for a deposition in a lawsuit against the paper.

The deposition was scheduled for 10 a.m., Sept. 11, 2001, and Jack decided at 8:50 that he could better spend his time out reporting locally on the 9/11 terror attack, but he neglected to tell the lawyers or his editor that.

Once Jack drove his hearse to a party at my house, causing half the neighborhood to gather on the sidewalk outside, wondering who had died.

He was fearless, always going where he wanted.

He walked onto the Baltimore set of his favorite TV show, "Homicide, Life on the Streets," and invaded the Phillies press box to pass the better part of a game with his hero Robin Roberts, according to another of Knarr's friends and a former colleague, Mark E. Vogler.

I'm told Jack died at 74 of a heart attack triggered by sleep apnea when he fell asleep after eating a pizza and watching a football game. That is exactly how he would have wanted to go.

"After all the columns he wrote, all the people he touched, people should know what happened to him," Vogler said.

I agree. I hope this will pass as an adequate sendoff.

***It is with great appreciation that we thank Jodine Mayberry for permission to use her article where she remembered our dear friend Jack. Jodine Mayberry is a retired editor, longtime journalist, and Delaware County resident.***



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Dear Michael,

18 Feb. 1988

You are being "naked" by an ancient Underwood Machine Gun brought to life one last time in a late-night orgy of joy here in Pt. Pleasant. This is, such a sad old piece of iron, ALMOST as sad as the three you guys got in trade from me, a machine that will never again look beautiful as Curt's museum pieces look (and I imagine your's look, too), but goddamn, you can't beat the old Underwood machinegun fire. Hell, before I hammered on the one Curt had, I hadn't heard that for ages.

It really is worthless, not even having been made in the T.T.V.S. However, rest and all, that Underwood touch is easier than even on the restored Royals.

DAMN! I'd forgotten what a NIGHTMARE it is to change a ribbon in these buggers! New ribbon does make a difference, though.

At any rate, I wanted to thank you immensely for the fine time I had the other day. Seeing the dedication of the two of you, I curse myself for having forgotten those rare machines in the shed over the years, busy tho they were. I thought they would "keep." Now it will take so many hours of work to make them presentable again, if at all. I wish you the best of luck, obviously. I know one thing -- these babies will stretch your talents to absolute limit, that's for sure.

Meanwhile, I find it a little strange that I find such joy in these common machines that I loved restoring in the late Sixties and Seventies, then began ignoring. But it's gratifying, too. These things were used on the job back then by me and they set up such a clatter in the newsroom -- fond memories. Newsrooms now are quiet and antiseptic for the most part. Maybe I'll take this old baby in one day and hammer out a few letters. (Curtis nearly lost his jaw when I pretended to lose grip on his Underwood, didn't he? That was crude of me and I hope he didn't think me an ass. Having used typewriters to the limit all my life, and having NEVER met another collector before, I didn't know how to act -- is it bad mannered to bang away like I did on his Underwood? Hmmm. Guess I'll have to adjust!

Anyway, I also want to commend you for the good condition the typewriters were in; there'll be no more ignoring them. They ALL type well! Ooops -- isn't it funny, I haven't gotten the folding job out yet. Tried all the others and hammered out four other letters tonight alone! The folding Hammond, however, did not look right for fest work.

The story hasn't run yet, but when it does, I'll mail you a few copies. Hope they run it as I wrote it. They rarely do. We've got a power-mad editor. She must have last word.

Anyway, I'll be down to see you after Fla. vacation (Feb. 24-March 1) I'll call ahead. THANKS AGAIN, MY FRIEND!!

*Jack*



14 MAR, 1988

P.O. Box #4  
Pt. Pleasant, Pa. 18950

Dear Michael,

Got a call last week from a guy in Trenton who has an Oliver dated 1912, wanted to know what it was worth, etc. So I'm writing the both of you to let you know. It's far out of the rare range, but the guy says it was covered, etc. Who knows? Name is Sam Cellura, 141 Lakedale Dr., Lawrenceville, N.J. 08648, 1-609-396-0142. (w)

(w) 1-609-394-1722

Too bad I went on vacation the day this appeared in the paper; even though I put your address in, I fielded two calls before I left, from readers who didn't want to take the time to write, I guess. Cellura even waited until I got back to call!

I was truly taken aback & saddened this week. Was in the area of Prior's Typewriter place the other day & stopped in to say hello -- & found out they were abandoning the store and moving! And that they'd tossed out all the old decals, parts, etc., plus "50 or 60 old typewriters" (but not the ancient stuff). Cleaning house, just like our stupid mothers throwing away comic books. I was really stricken. I said, "Jack, how could you DO that, when you know we collectors are out there?" He just said old typewriters weren't worth anything, didn't mean anything to him. Indeed. I made him take my number in case they were throwing anything else out. He did. No calls. Friday night I went in the alley behind his place. Sure enough, he's tossed a set of parts drawers and a little cabinet, & an old IBM. I can only shake my head. Then I remember that a year ago he lost his only son, a well-liked lawyer,



to cancer. So I guess to him old typewriters  
DON'T mean a shit, right. Still, I was in a funk  
for days. All those precious old decals ...

Anyway, I'll be down there one of these days. I  
can't get that Folding Hammond to work worth a  
shit, & I'll bring my trash-picked IBM Executive  
along. Take care.

Yours truly,

*Jack Luarr*

4-12-58

Dear Mike,

Hello, crazy guy. What a character you are! After watching you zipping around, bobbing and weaving and doing Aubert in all those "skits," I've got to meet that asshole. Ha!

Wanted to tell you again how much fun I had at the meeting of "the club." Thanks for the tips, too.

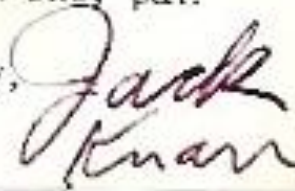
And I know you guys are so deep into this that you wouldn't look twice at a small standard old Underwood, but to me it's the case of sentimentality -- that machine that you'all gave me is an exact duplicate of the one my Dad gave me at age 6 for Christmas in 1949, a machine I learned to type on and (can you believe it?) managed to use until I knocked the "h" off it's typing arm. No, I didn't knock it off. Now I remember. I had to lift the key and press it onto the roller each time I needed it. Guess there was a little elbow disconnected in there somewhere. But at least the old Underwood got me into a profession that has managed to feed me all these years -- and indeed, the memory of it, got me into restoring and collecting in the late Sixties & Seventies. So, thanks! You two burns are sure gems.

And here is your instruction manual. What a complicated machine. I wouldn't know what half this stuff was about if I hadn't gotten this book. (A wire that pops up at the typing point? Gimme a break!)

Anyway, this "junk" IBM types a nice letter and I am sure is appreciated by those who read them. My one-finger typing isn't the greatest for its keyboard -- occasionally, the finger hits a key from the side, and it smashes up on a blur (see "a" in previous line) -- and maybe the proper thing to do with this beast is to learn to TYPE on it! (The right way!)

Well, enuf blabbering. Have a good one, pal. Got to head for work.

Yours truly,



PO Box #4  
Pt. Pleasant, PA. 18950

June 6, 1988

Hello, Michael!

Goddamn, Curt just showed me the Philadelphia Inquirer -- good show, you festering eyesore! Ha! Really, I thought you acquitted yourself well! I loved the five or six graphs he quoted you -- that was YOU! But I wish more of the article had been about you, because I know what kind of character you are. Throwing your arms out -- yeah, that was you. HA!

The reporter really did try to put your history in and the entire history of the typewriter and a picture and -- there really was alot there. In fact, after I read that article, I wish I'd done a more thorough job on the story I did about you two -- shucks, my article meandered around all over the place, from scrap yards to flea markets to Ft. Dix to Phila., and perhaps should have been better focused on the superb job you two guys do and maybe a little more history! Some perspective! Curt's article on the Russian inventor had that, too.

Heard you are deep into the family tree stuff, and I guess you need a freaking JUNGLE to hang all the Browns off of, right?

Thought I'd send on this ad from Antiques & Auction News -- this guy is truly making a serious attempt to grab up as much of this stuff as he can while its still relatively cheap, isn't he? This truly is the wave of the future, collecting these marvelous mechanical miracles to oogle after we've oogled video screens all day! But he apparently wants to HOG the field! And in the process, the jerk is in effect causing the prices to SOAR. And Poor Boys like us are going to suffer!

Oh well. Guess Curt told you I & that rotten rag I wrote for parted ways -- vicious editing dispute (they gutted my stuff!). But I hope to get a job tomorrow right across the river from you in Willingboro. If I don't, shoot, there's unemployment -- \$239 a week! Now that's livin.' Take care of yourself.

Sincerely,

Jack Knarr



PO Box #4  
Pt. Pleasant, PA 18950  
4/14/89

Dear Mike,

Thanks for these. I didn't know you and Curt were such prolific authors! Please absolutely FORGET all bumbling advice I attempted to give; you guys know exactly what is needed. And the members of this club are apparently very learned and will understand all details, etc. Jesus, why did you even ask me? I thoroughly enjoyed the two issues I read. And what's this business about you ~~not~~ being that acquainted with the Blick?! I saw that mention of an article comparing engineering of the Blick and the IBM.

By the way, the ball bearing fell out of the Tom Thumb, several times, so you're going to have to return the \$50 repair fee, heh heh. That goddamn thing, I wish it would work. I did write one letter on it.

I saw the writeup of a little get-together you had with other collectors; I'd love to attend any in the future if possible, and promise to keep my yap shut and my 278 pounds out of the way.

Also want to thank you again for your help in repairs, and in jabbering about these beasts. I truly appreciate you museum collectors and again, am glad the machines I had were saved.

Take care

*Jack Knarr*



Jack Knarr  
143 S. Main St.  
Medford, NJ 08055

Oct. 20, 1989

Dear Michael,

Hope you're holding up well in the miserable weather. I just wanted to thank you again for this GEM of an IBM Executive. This printing is pretty fine, if I don't say so myself. With a machine as clean and nice as this, I may have to become a goddamn WRITER, right?

Listen, mad dog, if you get to the point of cutting your throat or hanging from a tall tree, in this deal with your repairman/friend & widow, please give me a jingle (1-609-871-8155 or 8154). I'll be glad to grab a map & go pick up some machines, or deliver ones you've fixed, or perhaps watch the store for a few hours while you go get a shot of Thorazine, hehhch. If you find any, get me some.

Anyway, now that another month has passed, and you are no longer stretched to the limits of WORK, I just wanted to set down and take a moment to thank you for -- not only the green Executive, but also all the help you so freely give in keeping all the machines in such a fine state of tune! You know, these old things type so distinctively, that a typed book would look perhaps even nice than one of those typeset coldtype by a computer. There is a razor-sharp, almost 3-D effect to this work, with just a

hint of custom unevenness that made the ancient books interestingly special. I thank the lucky fates that allowed me to find THIS model discarded in a trashcan one morning in the countryside of North Jersey. Of all of the lovely typewriters and type-faces I've had and used, this one brings it all together in one piece. And I have also been developing new lower back muscles due to constantly switching off between this machine, & the green Executive. (Jesus, I looked under the green machine, and even the decal under there is fresh! The thing seems to have been used very little! In fact, I put on a new carbon ribbon, and read the old tape (it's fun being nosy like that!) and found numerous letters seeking employment, etc., apparently from a man in Downingtown, Pa. And the tape covered everything from about 1982 to the present, indicating the machine has hardly ever been used -- at least not for the past eight years, anyway. There was a note in the tape, apparently written by a repairman, claiming the machine needed a new power roll. The note was recent. No way for me to tell whether it really needs one or whether the guy put a new one in, or what. Whatever, the Green Machine works great. And I'm going to switch now in order to say G-O-O-D-B-Y-E!!!

Oops, I forgot to tell you what a NIGHTMARE trip I had back home the other night! Jesus, that crusty old Oldsmobile blew sky-high about five times over



the next 15 miles! What a disaster. It's no fun being stuck on the grass medial strip of Roosevelt Blvd., waiting to get creamed from behind or hauled in by a cop or robbed by anybody!

Finally as a last resort I ripped the thermostat out, at a gas station on Street Road, & managed to struggle on home to New Jersey. I cussed myself all the next day. One thing that was making the car run so poorly was that in all the blowing, etc., a spark plug wire had come off. That shit must have been original 12-year-old showroom equipment, too.

So anyway, I'm off to Schuylkill Haven to go see Dad again on another daring five-hour trip (without a spare tire, no less). Ah, what the hell.

Theo was happy with his typewriter, and showed me one trick it does that my special IBM Executives don't do -- squeeze the letters closer and closer on command, from 12 spaces an inch down to 7. (Ooops, I have that wrong -- from 7 down to 12)

Let me know when you get that Underwood in working condition. I would love to type on it if you don't mind. If you do, please tell me. I'm still amazed you found one so ancient. To me, that one has always been the exotic stuff of story books! What a find for your museum, the rarest Underwood. The Sholes was certainly enough to boggle my mind, too.

Well, gotta go, mad dog.

2 NOV. 1990

143 S. Main St.,  
Medford, NJ 08055

You Animal!

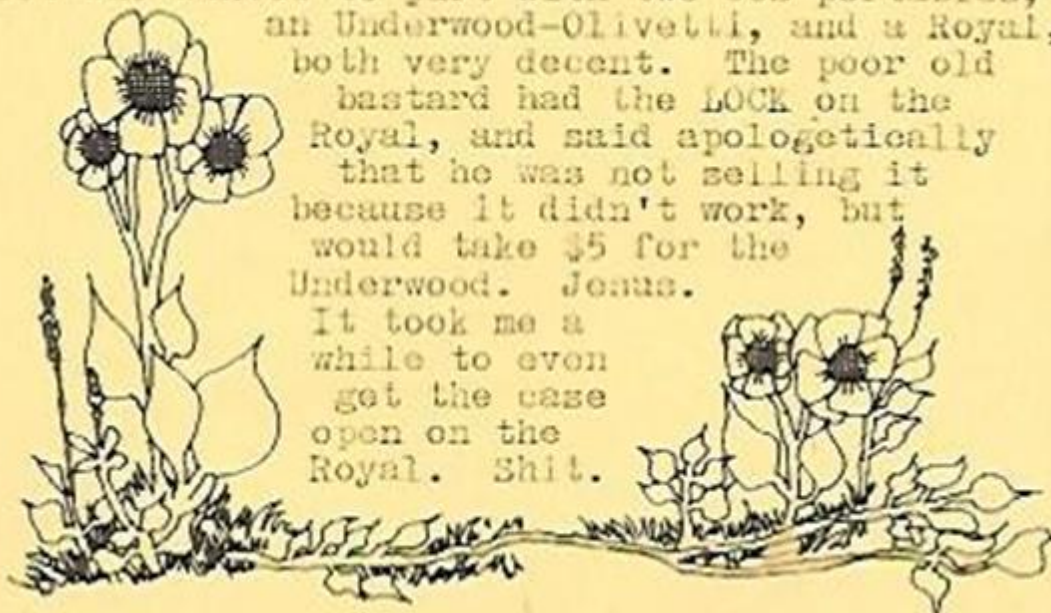
You tried to bend the TRUNK LID on my 1951 Underwood Electro-(cruiser!!! You violated the vaginal area of my formerly virginal Olympia script-writer! (Wait a minute -- that's supposed to read HOOD of my Underwood. Need another cup of coffee, I see.)

Seriously, I wanted to thank you again for getting these two old bastards in decent operating order. I don't know how long this Underwood is going to hold out -- I hear increasingly-loud gravelly noises emitting from in there, so maybe the BEARINGS are going bad, heh heh. If it stops again, it becomes A MIKE BROWN MUSEUM PARTS TYPEWRITER.

As for the Olympia, I adjusted that dohicky to the side that you were so reluctant to get into, and that got both black & red on the ribbon working. She cleaned up nice.

Late Sunday: Now, dammit, I'm just back from the flea market, where I came across an old coot who wanted to part with two 60s portables, an Underwood-Olivetti, and a Royal, both very decent. The poor old bastard had the LOCK on the Royal, and said apologetically that he was not selling it because it didn't work, but would take \$5 for the Underwood. Jesus.

It took me a while to even get the case open on the Royal. Shit.





It was mint and had rarely if ever been used. He said, "I don't want anything for it; take it for free." This was the very first typewriter I'd ever bought myself (one of those little Signets for \$26.75 in 1966), and I felt so guilty I gave him \$10 for the both. Did you say your customers are clamoring for those little manual beauties? Shoot, I'm going to have to bring a LOAD of this stuff down to you, pal. This goddamn bedroom is just FILLED with typewriters. I just stopped to count -- at least 13 that I can SEE. This sickness must cease!

The above was written on the Underwood.

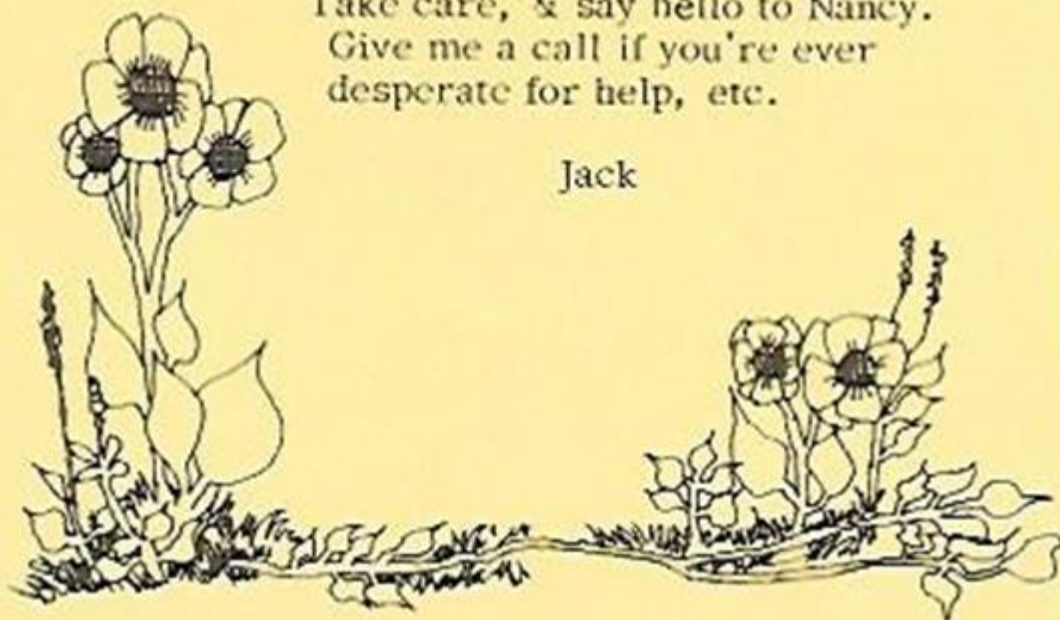
*This here is written on a truly classy white-and-grey Olympia portable of beautiful construction, bought for \$12 at the same flea market.*

*This is written on the Olympia you raped! The script is taller than on the portable.*

And this is done on my all-time favorite, the IBM Executive variable-spacer. I haven't used it in a couple of months, and it's a little balky. Guess that's allowed.

Oh well, guess I'll hit the rack.  
Take care, & say hello to Nancy.  
Give me a call if you're ever  
desperate for help, etc.

Jack





143 S. Main St., Medford, N.J. 08055    March 16 1991

Dear Mr. Brown,

I'm going to come down there and strangle your scrawny little neck with my big BLUE hands, you rat! Or that ribbon manufacturer who cut this roll to the wrong width! Let's go get him together, Mike. That anal implosion. I just spent a hellacious hour and a half trimming a quarter inch off nine yards of the Deep Purple, and I mean to tell you, Bro, I's done changed skin color!

I know, I know, we're in this for the adventure of it all, right? Right. And I guess after you find an 88-year-old Remington pure in its original box and you spruce it up with new rollers and a fresh ribbon and everything works and it types beautifully as it does, I guess that's adventure, right? You say this adventure wouldn't make a pimple on the Brown/Scaglione/Aubert ass? Say what?

Well, for an amateur it is. By the way, I forgot to give you a clip of Column Desperation the other night, so here it is. Jesus, thank goodness for oddball bullshit, right?

This is hilarious, though. I taped the ends of my fingers so I wouldn't get ink on them, and of course after 90 minutes of bullshit, the entire HANDS get purple, so here I look like a freak or something with white fingertips and blue hands. Guess it'll wear off in a couple of years.

Listen, it was nice visiting, as always. As Curt said one time I called him, "That Mike's something, isn't he? Don't know what we'd do without him!" And he's right. I know it does me a world of good to get in there to visit that little fantasyland hole-in-the-wall. You never know what kind of stray old creature of a machine will show up there next!

And by the way, I just thought I'd show you how truly sharp all this new bullshit prints when used on smooth good paper, not that fuzzy stuff I usually save for the distinctive Executive's deep-cut carbon typing (Testimonial) which shows good on the quality fuzz.

Now after all of this, there is only one slight problem with the beautiful Remington #6.

I can't fucking see what I'm typing!

Yours in  
Typing Hell,

Jack Knarr



143 S. Main St.,  
Medford, NJ 08055-2417  
June 4, 1991

Dear Mike,

I honest-to-Christ don't know how you keep your sanity in the typewriter repair business, pal.

*I can tell you this much, bruther:*

I WOULD GO STARK RAVING MAD!!! I will even show you HOW mad: I@#%&\*()\_+":?..../';\*=-1987654321

Jesus, did I see a little Iron Cross, and the Star of David, in those Olde English symbols? Ha! JUST FOR YOU, my friend. Seriously, I got everything working and washed-down and buttoned-up and screwed tight and cleaned on the IBM and test-drove it a few lapd on scrap paper, and wheeled in a fresh piece of paper for a letter. And the sonuvabitch started skipping two and three spaces on the return.

I'll tell you, if I didn't have these other RELIABLE machines on which to type, I might be genuinely ticked off.

I will say one thing: This IBM Executive variable-spacer found almost four years ago in a trash can is still -- for cost, worry, fuss, and genuine good quality typing -- the best goddamn bargain of the bunch.

I don't think we can even BEGIN to consider this \$100 "Electromatic." Unless, of course, you want to give me \$200 for it.

So I guess I'll just finish off on the world's most reliable typewriter, The last True Royal, the Litton model of the indestructable '17 machine, and the cemetery monument to the American manual typewriter industry. By the way, I just found that guy's name with the American. The serial no., by the way, is 588B(???) (Look, forget the American, give me the \$500, & I'll give you a 1/5 share in my Buick, heh heh.  
Jack



## Ribbon tins: This writer's type of story

The people at Curtis-Young, the Cincinnati company that manufactures ribbons for business machines, must have thought Mike Brown was a little buggy.

He had taken a few hours off yesterday from his own business, Steek Typewriter Sales & Service in Philadelphia, to make the trip over to Jersey, the sole purpose of which was to dredge up information about the 1958 merger of U.S. Carbon & Ribbon into Curtis-Young.

See, Brown not only has a vast typewriter collection, but lately he has become obsessed with the collection of — I'm not kidding — typewriter ribbon tins. Magnetic strips along the

back wall at his shop hold dozens of the colorful tins on display.

Now he's putting together a little history of typewriter tins, the earliest of which was made about 1879.

Along the way, Mike found one of the old tins distributed by U.S. Carbon & Ribbon of Philadelphia before the 1958 merger. The trip to Curtis-Young was to research the merger. U.S.

Carbon was started in 1893, and he was wondering if Curtis-Young had taken in and saved any old U.S. Carbon artifacts. Executive Al Hausner, who joined Curtis-Young in 1962, said he knew of none. He did have one great story about the old company, though.

**Jack Knarr**



"The first huge computer was devised in the late 1940s," Al said. "It was a room full of diode tubes, vacuum tubes."

This was the famous ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Calculator), the first all-electronic computer invented by J. Presper Eckert and John W. Mauchly at the University of Pennsylvania in 1946.

Al Hausner held up a

fingertip.

"Today you could put all the information contained in that room, on this," he said.

Anyway, after ENIAC was built, there was one slight, um, problem.

"They needed a ribbon," Al said. "They had devised this big thing, and it could print something, but it needed a very big ribbon on which to print."

"The engineers all of a sudden realized they had gotten this huge monster, and nobody had any way for it to transcribe the calculations into hard copy," because they needed a ribbon.

Good grief. A little old typewriter uses maybe a half-inch ribbon, but what on earth

would a ROOM use?

"U.S. Carbon at 6th & Cherry was making shoe-marking ribbons," said Al, laughing. Shoe-marking ribbons have to do with marking patterns on raw shoe leather, and so on. They're used in shoe factories and are about a foot wide. Later, we saw one at Curtis-Young's manufacturing plant in Pennsylvania.

"And it had that wide machine," said Al. "That wide machine was the machine that inked the first ribbon for the first computer."

"Therefore, Curtis-Young, by virtue of its acquisition of U.S. Carbon, has gained the antiquity back to 1893 when U.S. Carbon was formed, and can really say that its division manufactured the first computer printer ribbon."

Too bad nobody saved any of that. But back then, there were other concerns, such as the heat from the 18,000 radio tubes that filled ENIAC's un-air-conditioned brain.

Anyway, one thing that was obvious at Curtis-Young was that these people make ribbons, and there is nothing sentimental about it. Business has increased by 400 percent since 1983. Even in the past year, business improved slightly. They do more than \$20 million in business annually, and the parent company, Forbort International AG, based in Wuppertal, Germany, does about \$250 million worldwide.

Yes, there was a clean, unsentimental, almost-Germanic efficiency about the place. No old ribbon tins. No new tins, either. They'd be too expensive to make these days.

So ribbons are packaged in plain white cardboard boxes. Mike Brown couldn't even take back a new evolutionary sample of packaging with the Curtis-Young name on it to add to his wall.

But anyway, Mike brought along about three dozen of the old original tins, painted with airplanes and typewriters and chevrons and women and just about anything you could imagine.

And the old tins brought smiles of memory to the faces of the busy execs like vice president Mike Goodman and Hausner — and Peter Curtis, 31, of Mount Laurel, son of one of the founders of Curtis. Young, Yeld Curtis, now 70 and retired in Las Vegas.

Those guys are all obviously successful. Hausner and Peter Curtis both drive BMWs and carry Mont Blanc pens. Goodman has a bright red Saab.

But their offices are unadorned, all business. Peter was even sitting in a scruffy well-used chair.

"Kee Lox Brand. My father could tell you a lot about Kee Lox and all this old stuff," Peter said, looking at an old tin.

Peter is a handsome man, all set to marry his fiancée, Jolly Hargrove of Collingswood, in April, and he said he has been in this business for 12 years.

"I started working the taking spoil, and doing all that stuff," he said. "My father was from the old school, pay me 200 bucks a week and kick my ass around the plant. But then when I went out to sell it, I knew the product." The product now includes typewriter, computer and cash register ribbons — all kinds of ribbons.

And what are you driving today? I asked.

"BMW convertible," he said. And a Mont Blanc pen — he had it made.

"That's all right," Peter said. "I also helped build the company from \$7 to \$20 million, too."

"I had two brothers, but my father fired them both," he said. "He's from the old school. You performed, or you were gone, he didn't care if you were blood or not."

And that little anecdote sort of summarized the business — the profitable part of the "publishing" business. I bet paper manufacturers are all the same. I liked it. These guys didn't have to worry about transitions or sentence structure. They drive great cars and carry fancy pens. They operate with one comfortable realization:

"It's been tough for the last year and a half," Peter said, "but this is a business where, as my father used to always say, 'When times are tough, you don't starve, and when times are great, you do OK.'


"But (the ribbon) is something that everybody needs," he said. "People have to print invoices to get paid."

"You use it every day," said Al Hausner, "and you throw it away." And then buy more.

WEDNESDAY, February 12, 1992

Jack Knarr's human interest column appears four days a week in the Burlington County Times.





143 S/ Main St., Medford, NJ 08055

Dear Mike,

Just thought you would like to know that your kind generosity to me one day wound up helping make an old lady's Christmas, pal.

Remember that beautiful fresh green IBM Executive typewriter you just up and gave me one day? I used it now and then at home (as I do five other typewriters, including this precious 1903 #6!) and decided to take it to work and make it my office machine, to get even more use out of it.

Well, I didn't have it in there two days, and I got the saddest, most awful letter in the mail from a 75-year-old woman who faced a truly bleak Christmas and was asking for help. She hand-delivered it while I was gone.

Anyway, her daughter had committed suicide this year due to cancer. Another daughter with whom she lived was about to be thrown out of the house she currently lives in because she can't afford the rent/ Grammy's typewriter, with which she claims to have typed 75 words a minute, had been swiped; she said she's used that to make a few bucks here and there. She wrote that it didn't look like she could afford to have everybody over for Christmas dinner.

When I got it a week ago, I was pissed. No. 1, I was depressed enough without the public putting the arm on me. I ignored it for about five days, as I walked glazed-eyed through the malls, trying to get my own shit together.



Then this morning, an old friend from Hollywood, Fla., sent me a HUGE white poinsetta by florist's "telegraph."

And as soon as I saw it, I knew I was going to give it to the old lady. So I plopped that in the back seat, and I Xeroxed the IBM Executive's operations manual.

Then I swiped some correction paper from the supply cabinet. I'd already brought a box of carbon ribbons along from home. I typed a note about all the intricacies of the beast, and I taped a chart of the backspacing on the front. Then I went and got her a turkey and filling and corn and ice cream and took it all over -- she wasn't there, but her daughter -- she had kids yowling all over -- went bug-eyed.

Just wanted to thank you for the gift in the first place, and to let you know that it passes on.

I put new rubber rollers on this bugger today, but they're too thick and aren't operating well.

Got to go to another auto parts store on Monday, get it right. Come to think of it, I guess I ought to put a drop or two of OIL on this old beau

Well, I just took everything apart on the new roller system, and sanded them all down a little, and trimmed off the edges more exactly, and you know what? The sonsofbitches still don't do the job as well as they should. There is still a bit of sliding around of the paper while making it go to the next line.

Hmmm. I guess it's better. Maybe I ought to go to double lines

and see what happens. You know,

I accidentally went to doubles. Well, here goes.

You know, Mike, I can't believe how smooth this old wooden contraption works. No wonder they kept this model in manufacture until 1914, years and years and years after the great Underwood "sighted" writer. You know, I think I'll keep it doubles.

It works perfectly. If only it had a freaking backspacer!

I want to thank you for lending me the manual and the serial number information, which I Xeroxed.





# Burlington County Times

Jan. 27, 1993

Dear Mike,

Hey, dude, thanks for letting me have the repaired Oliver #2 back ahead of payment (enclosed): it is much appreciated. Sadly, I realize that my #3 types better than this #2 (dammit). Oh well, I can hear legions of collectors (Curt & your pal Bob Aubert) talking about stress in the metal & it's best not to type on them, and so on. That ribbon was old & dry; this ribbon is wide, old & dry, and another little fresh machine ribbon you gave me was poorly-inked (with globs of ink every 3 inches or so). So I may be forced to bandon this bastard until another day. Anyway, MM I'm now aware of why the Oliver isn't alive today: jumpy line of work, and the three-tier key bullshit. God is this cranky! SEE YOU SOON, BRO!!!

Jack

ROUTE 130

WILLINGBORO, N.J. 08046

~~P.S. I owe you \$5 + will pay~~

~~you next time~~

BURLINGTON TIMES INC

~~Sorry I can't~~

609-871-8000

~~break this shit!~~

jan 29, 1993

Jacque,

JACK KEMAR  
105 SPRUCE LN  
SOUTH PLAINFIELD, N.J.

Muchas gracias senor,

08088

Rec'd. the 25 bucks, and spent it already.  
I really enjoyed your column, you enclosed,  
as allways.

Maybe I should take out a subscription and  
become a regular.

Listen, I just ordered a "fresh" roll  
(144yds) of that Oliver 7/16" ribbon.  
It will take about 2 weeks to get it,  
but please remind me to rip off a hunk of  
it and mail it to you. no charge, sarge !!


I gotta get back to f\_\_kin work cause I'm  
swamped again.

Hey I saw that hot babe Audrey Norris again,  
and she was asking for you, so I gave her  
your home address and ph.!!!!(just kidding)

I hate D A L L A S but I pick them to  
win the big one. Whats your pick???

see ya.

MIKE

 M. Brown  
BUSINESS MACHINE REPAIR  
9131 BUSTLETON AVE, PHILA, PA 19115 • (215) 677-5879



# Burlington County Times

Feb. 4, 1993

Dear Mike,

Sweet God almighty, 144 YARDS of Oliver ribbon? Holy shit, what are you going to do with all that? Resurrect the freaking brand name? Open an Oliver SHOWROOM? You know what? I just pulled the Model #11 "Speedster" off the shelves, and notice that it's ribbon is nice and wide. Not only that, it has TABS (Holy Shit!) and incredible stuff like MARGIN RELEASES and RIBBON REVERSALS, and a sleek new box design without those handles on each side. You know what else? The fucking patented Oliver throw-lack knob doesn't work right. Now which goddamned one ever did?

Well, I thought I'd haul out the #3 I bought off Bob Aubert, because it seems to have more satisfying key action than any of them. But boy, I miss that back-spacer. Anyway, thought I'd send along a column I know will tickle your pigskin, you old Philadelphia. Had a great interview with Chuck Bednarik. But I caught hell the next day from the boys in the office, because they remembered his nickname was Concrete Charlie. Well, I can't be expected to remember everything.

I see where your D.A. in Philly was getting death threats from some psychotic crank, and immediately thought of your pal Audrey. I hear she is going to haunt you with that crappy Smith-Corona Electric until THE END OF TIME. Aren't typewriters forever?

PS-- I picked Dallas "by two or three TDs" but told my son not to bet (he's a Cowboy fanatic) because I recalled last yr Dallas being swamped by Detroit

*Jack*

ROUTE 130

WILLINGBORO, N.J. 08046

BURLINGTON TIMES INC

609-871-8000

# Burlington County Times

3 APR. 1993

Vo, Mike!

*Order me up one of these nice new typewriter keyboards, will you?  
I see this magazine is from Sept. 1990-- it ought to be in production by  
now.*

*And while you're at it, git me an office in this nice newfangled  
building, too.*

*By the way, thanks for that \$5,000 loan. I'll see you in Vegas.*

*Sin-cerely,  
Knarr*

ROUTE 130

WILLINGBORO, N.J. 08046

DCT 756

BURLINGTON TIMES INC

609-871-8000

## MONDAY

the long descent into hell begins.

-- A Walter Lee comes in & picks up a typewriter you have attempted to fix four times. Says he doesn't owe the \$125 bill, & I believe him.

-- Ed Bonikowski has brought in a (shudder) typewriter that has Exxon marked on it. Wants you to call his sister Marge (see slip) & ask her what it's doing wrong, and estimate repairs. He's a salesman from Jersey-- from my neck of the woods, as it turns out. I told him you were an expert on Exxon typewriters and to bring others in. (Only kidding; I snowed him the big bastard here you'd already fagged out on.) Marge: 1-609-~~261~~522-825

-- It's 1:59 and despite two calls, John Singleton hasn't returned our blab.

-- An mm old coot who gave you an adding machine came in with a Hermes Rocket that has a broken ribbon lifter (right side front of platen). I looked around back here & couldn't find any.

-- Well, John called at 2:14, & the news isn't good. He's going into hospital Tuesday & said Thursday was the earliest he could pick these two typewriters up. So I guess there's nothing to do but wait until Thursday. (I told him you wanted them by Friday, but he didn't budge.)

-- A LITTLE LONG GREEN, at long last. It is 3:53 p.m. A nice lady bartender who is studying office work came in and bought an IBM carbon ribbon. I can't believe it. I got to open the cash register and put in \$5.60 plus \$.39 cents tax. Jesus, this IS a store, not a rest & recreation center, after all. Let's see. If I were Mike & Nancy, I would rush out with my \$5.60, buy a bag of rice, visit the day-old bread store, bottle up some city water and put it on ice, and have a really big rich supper. Talks about WEALTH! This store is too much!

-- EEK. A nice lady with a (gag) Smith Corona Elctra wants a black & white correctible ribbon, & that is \$5.30 (Mike, you can order hamburgers now for everybody!), and I put it on for her, and forget to charge \$2 extra! Chalk it up to good will.

## TUESDAY

-- GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE. Leonard at Keystone called and started in, "You know those two IBMs you've been working on for the past 6 months ..." I stopped him right there. He'll be calling after Aug. 1.

-- LET THE CUSTOMER RUN THE STORE. A nice lady wanting rare IBM 75 ribbons came in, & I searched & looked in books, etc., twice, only to find that SHE had found what she needed. I'm hiring her for consultant work later. (I haven't told her what the pay is, though; that might spoil my plans.) \$7.06



- WANNA BUY A SEARS TYPEWRITER, MIKE? A city worker who says he sells you typewriters (picked off street garbabe, no doubt) lugged in a portable electric that I just KNEW you'd wanna see. On Aug. 1, a whole FLOCK of loons will be descending on this lair. Take cover.
- THE CATHOLICS SPRING FOR \$35! Yes, this Protestant witnessed something new and shocking: A sister (or nun?) spending \$35 to pick up repaired Smith-Corona GarbageMaster. This was at 2:59 p.m. Tuesday July 26. Archbishop Bevallacqua (spell-wrong?) grabbed his heart.

### WEDNESDAY

- AHFFF. A FUN CALL: Tom Fitzgerald called to alert you that the Cooper/Hewitt Museum near NYC Central Park is looking for somebody who collects checkwriters, & that he told them the biggest collector in the galaxy lives right here in Phila. Should he give them your number? They want to borrow machiges for a show. Asst. Curator Linda King is at 212-860-6882; Tom, of course, is at 784-3947 (office) and 232-0328 (home)
- GEEZ, STEAK!!! -- Mrs. Mahoney picked up her repaired Olympia Portable; the \$36.86 is in the box. I would never be able to actually operate a freaking store. I still don't know which to give customers as a receipt, the claim card (that's what I gave her, heh heh), the paper, or the card. Anyway, all that junk has been left in a pile on the left of the cash register.
- ARE WE THE CUSTOMERS HERE, OR WHAT?! You get more visitors & phoners who want to sell you typewriters than those who want to BUY, Mike. All these wonderful people were instructed to call the rich guy who runs this store on Monday when he returns from vacation. One old decrepit lady came in here with a babushka on (in this heat!) babbling about living in an old house that had some rusty typewriters in the cellar. She didn't know what kind they were, & she stank so bad I told her to go home and find out (hoping she'd stay), but she returned. Said they were called a Cooper and a National, but I never heard of them, and ran her out again. Jesus, was she ripe! Are these people attracted to YOU, Mike? Do they come in because they think you're here?
- GET READY FOR MADNESS, MIKE: Susan from Data Processing Trainers, with whom you have a contract, wants to know the minimum number of machines you'll take at once for repair. Said she'll call Monday. I wanted to take her number, but she said she's in class.
- OUT OF HOSPITAL: Woman at Bernstein's ~~632-0300~~ (632-0300) said John S. was just being discharged from hospital now (4:40 p.m. Weds.) after two days in there. Who knows if he'll be here tomorrow?
- OUT OF SHOP: Carmella Acroff's son picked up her machine which was paid in full in advance (slip on pile)

THURSDAY

- NUTS: I think the nice lady from Monday with the Smith Corona Electra who bought a ribbon has left the lid to that machine on the front counter. It's blue. So am I.
- THE FIXER IS HERE: John came in to fix two machines, even tho he had taken the day off from Bernsteins. The big machine was a piece of cake -- a loose wheel that John calls "a moneymaker" for you guys. Charge at will. He cleaned the thing up beautifully. The little portable Panasonic was fine except for that ribbon holder, which he didn't have along. He took machine along, after a cleaning. ~~MMM~~ I'm trying to save him another trip down here, so am picking up machine in Bensalem Sat. morning & delivering it back to this shop about 10 or 11 a.m. ~~MMMMMM~~ Mandy Desai was alerted that machine would be ready in here at noon Monday and that she wouldn't be charged any extra for weekend ~~possession~~ possession of rental typewriter. I told her to call you re/how much she owes. I paid John his \$30 (\$15 each) for fixing two machines, out of the register.
- Guy buys 3 S-Corona correctible ribbons @4.99: \$14.97 plus \$1.03= \$16 in the box!
- FRANK LLOYD WRONG: Architect Ivor Moore (333-2506) brought the Adler you fixed back, saying it was still doing the same thing wrong, with 6s coming up when he hit the capital T, and 8 for Ys. But we plugged it in & hammered on the bastard during 15 minutes of chewing the fat, & it didn't malfunction once ... unlike this stiff freaking MULE of a FACIT. My God is this an awful typewriter.
- I'M HOOKED: The IBM Composer is a complicated but neat machine. But the backspacer doesn't seem to work. And I guess it has no correction. What's the story on it? I'd love to buy it off the guy if it's reasonable, or even (if he's looking ~~am~~ to fill a typing need) trade him my huge clean neat new Xerox Memorywriter! That Composer types like a freaking book! I didn't think I'd find a machine I wanted in here this time, but HEEEEELP! I'M HOOOOKED!!!



# Burlington County Times

9 AUG. 1993

Dear Mike,

How are you, you old hambone? Thought I'd take a break from the rotten computer to do some QUALITY work on the IBM Rumblemobile. The incredible thing is that even though these bastards weigh 3 ton, they still jump like a goosed virgin when you hit the old return button. And they walk across the table like a swaggering drunk old whore. (Sounds like I need a piece of ass, doesn't it?) (To answer my own question, Yes.)

Anyway, I came across an old mag from Nov., '92, and since the entire front section was gummed up (honest-to-god, it looks like somebody maybe 90 years ago used it to jerk off into here & there), I just ripped out the advertising section & send it along here. This stuff is classic. Plus there are about a dozen typewriter ads.

Do you leave that missing knob (or rather, lever) from the top of this beast, on your bench or anywhere when you had it apart? (No, do not part out the legendary 50¢ beauty. Someday when yer old & grey and buggy-- buggier-- in the brain, you'll want to waste a week or two re-doing that item. Meanwhile, I thank you for this truly great machine. She works extremely well, and I haven't even touched the 1903 Remington since I got it. I can see why the IBM empire flourished & prospered.

Sincerely, Jack Knarr

ROUTE 130

BURLINGTON TIMES INC

WILLINGBORO, N.J. 08046

609-871-8000



105 Spruce Lane,  
Southampton, NJ 08088-1751  
May 25, 1995

Yo, Mike!

I just got <sup>one</sup> of the film ribbons out of the box to put into this nut-grinder, and realized I didn't give you nearly enough \$\$\$ when I bought the goddamn things last week! What the heck did I give you, \$6? Jesus. I looked at the \$2.90 on each box, doubled it, and paid you. Only now do I realize that \$2.90 is what you charge per *ribbon*, not per *box*.

Anyway, there were only nine ribbons in the two boxes, not 12. I figure you'd give me a price break as you usually do, to, say, \$1.75 a ribbon, or a total \$15.75. Minus the \$6 I already have given you, equals \$10. So, here it is, you little weasel! HA!

By the way, the *bottom only* of another Liberty Ribbon Co. tin showed up at the flea market last weekend, without the lid, for \$6. If that is of any interest to you, gimme a call (609-261-1882).

Jack K.

105

105

105 Spruce Lane

105 Spruce Lane  
Southampton, NJ 08088-1751  
June 16, 1995

Dear Mr. Steck (or is that STUCK?),

Can you believe that this goddamned typewriter actually WORKS? (I guess you can, having worked on the thing for hours, no doubt!) Jesus, I just glanced down inside the top, while typing a few letters, and watched that band vibrating around and turning and tensing – it's amazing that whole operation works at all, right? I guess I ought to look upon this typing as life itself: Fragile and unlikely to continue unhindered for long. But while everything is working well, the result sure is beautiful, isn't it? Once again, thanks so much for fixing the beast. Also, I asked you before I left how much I owed for this job, but that customer came in. Let me know! I'll have money on Thursday. I guess I ought to begin hiring out PRINTING WORK so this old grey slug can begin paying for itself, heh heh. The only trouble is, this machine types so perfectly, that I can't even look at the work done even by such a fresh neat machine as that lady's red IBM Executive, without flinching over all the errors of lining and spacing, etc. I'm sure that with a fresh roller, and use, etc., that it would work better, and the result would be nicer to read. But what could possibly be more satisfying than THIS work? Nothing. Not even a computer, in my book.

By the way, when I got home today, there was a card in



the mail from three guys -- Tom FitzGerald, Tom Russo and Jim Rauen (the latter two from Delaware and Calif., respectively) -- inviting the recipient "to an informal gathering of typewriter nuts! No formal agenda. Just good friends getting together for the fun of it!"

The dates were July 8 & 9 at collector Russo's office and private museum in Wilmington. "Bring along something for show-and-tell, or something to sell or swap," it says. "And don't forget your favorite stories of the ones that got away."

HA! It doesn't say why it's two days or where one is supposed to stay overnight. Do you want to throw a few things in the trunk of the Buick and zip down there on a Saturday, see what's happening? It says for more detailed information, we're supposed to call FitzGerald or the other guys. Fitz is at 232-9328. I just realized, that's in three weeks. I just checked the calender. Not a goddamned thing going on. I was trying to think what I could take along. Bet I'd be the only guy there with the ULTIMATE TYPEWRITER: The IBM Scumposer.

You know the really sad thing? The information on the back of the post card is obviously generated by a freaking computer. Which is fine, I guess, if you're reproducing something in big numbers. But even the goddamn addressing on the front is done by HAND, not by typewriter. Jesus. How nuts about typewriters can these guys be? Hmmm.

THANKS FOR THE CHAIR!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jack", written in dark ink.

105 Spruce Lane,  
Southampton Twp., NJ 08088-1751  
July 10, 1995

Hey, Mike,

While you were away this weekend, the Inquirer published this "Ode to the Typewriter" in Saturday's paper, which you might have missed. Too bad they had to go quote your pals at Ted Bundy's. That's what happens when you're an advertiser for years; I remember those Bundy ads every Sunday. Somehow, I was never lured there. Got sidetracked at Steck's.

Hope you had a good time at the get-together, and that you didn't go buy any more \$5,000 typewriters!

Sorry for forgetting about the date, and for having to bow out. It would have been hell going down there with a mere \$50 in my pocket, and that's all I got left, bruther. I paid my son's \$191 traffic fines in Philadelphia (those greedy bastards probably notified Harrisburg; I hope not). And \$400 rent. And \$66 electric. And THEN John's TV blew. I'll tell you, if my basketball pal doesn't come up with \$300 I need to borrow, I'm gonna give you a call. Didn't you sell that Sholes & Glidden for \$10,000 over the weekend?

Well, I'll be down there to gab about the trip one of these days.

Take care,

*Jack*



105 Spruce Lane  
Southampton Twp., NJ 08088-1751

Aug. 30, 1996

Dear Mike,

Yo, typewriter man! I hit the jackpot yesterday at wonderful old Columbus when, in the last aisle, there was this lovely IBM Composer sitting there on somebody's table, filthy as sin itself, for a mere \$10. And let me add this: !!!!!

I doubted it worked, but it looked complete (great PARTS, you know, to fix cosmetics on my good one which slid off a pile of shit in my room and was bruised). And there was an untouched little box of new carbon ribbons, and two balls, and a cover (which must rarely have been on this thing, because it IS filthy). (It has White-out spitzed around on the metal body, and old pieces of glue from tape here and there, and Jesus, animals must have nested on this keyboard, or an old person with a snout problem or an itchy ass.) It's going to be delicious cleaning this thing up, after I get a column written today.

But I got it home, and plugged the bastard in, and everything works! All that justification shit even seems to be sliding properly, etc., even though I have no idea how it works. (By the way, when I get down to your place next time, remind me to retrieve your two rare books from my trunk; you let me borrow them to copy them, & I forgot to return them - forgot they were back there! So remind me next time!

Is this fucking typewriter great, or what?! By the way, that American Flyer was uproken.



1/4/97

Yo. "Ho...

Well, a nice long football weekend is in progress during which I will be able to FINALLY get my Christmas cards mailed out -- the first of the '97-'98 holiday season by the way.

I thought of you today (Saturday) when I arrived at the Lambertville flea market and two tables in spotted a grungy old Underwood typewriter. I haven't bought a typewriter worth mentioning -- except that #5 Hammond -- in possibly years. And I was moving on past when I noticed it looked a little interesting. Shit. I looked on the back and that wasn't a normal old Underwood decal on the back. It said "Wagner Typewriter Manufacturing Co. New York with patent dates of 1890 and 1891! JAY WHAT!!!

The thing was very straight but with tarnished and rusty jewelry as I call the shiny parts and the guy wanted \$20 and I said now about \$5 and we settled on \$10.

When I got it home however I noticed a super-obscure patent date in the middle of 1896 and after I read up on Underwood history that seems right. She's a No. 1 the same as the clean experimental No. 1 you sold me a few years back. *that's the typewriter* this machine in fact. I got it out to compare it and except for the dead comma which was manufactured for accountants I guess and does not move the carriage forward a



space as other machines do that No. 1 is exactly the same as the latest one. Figure this out though: the experimental (KV 324 stamped on front and 1023 1/2 on the body) has a full array of Wagner patent dates across the back ending in 1900. This latest machine from 1896 is numbered 10249 and is obviously commercially-sold (hillips in Harrisburg). And I think it's one of the first 12000 that John Underwood hired Wagner to make so he could give the finger to Remington. According to one of the histories Underwood made all the ribbons and carbons that Remington sold through 1893 when Remington told him they wouldn't need him any more they were going to make their own ribbons etc. He said "Well if you're going to make ribbons I'm going to make typewriters." And so the war against the typewriter trust began. John Underwood made millions.

(By the way my theory on the KV-324 is that Underwood made it real early and kept it around until 1900 when somebody slapped a current decal on it and sold it then. That would explain the early serial number and the later decal.)

Also the freaking guy says he has another one at home an older Underwood with a date in the 1880s that has 'bronze-basketwork' on it. I have no idea what this is. I hope it's an early WILNER!!! He wants \$40 for that beauty. (Actually you know what I really hope -- that it's the legendary bronze Remington-sholes from the late 1880s.)

See you soon. Have a happy new year/  
You too Nancy!

*Jack*

105 Spruce Lane,  
Southampton, NJ 08048-1751

Nov. 19, 1997

Hey, Mike!!!

How are you, you no-good sack of sorry white trash?  
Hope you're making tons of money down in that bidness hot spot.  
I'd ~~come~~ visit your museum, but you charge too much admission!!  
Plus, the ~~least~~ you could do is vacuum up the sleazy old rugs in  
there, you maggot.

I see the virgin run of this old typewriter is not working  
all that well. What we have here is a long-neglected

Harmond 12 found on its backside in a cardboard box full of other  
household shit, among numerous cardboard boxes of other crap  
obviously taken out of a house that was cleaned out. Nothing was  
of quality. But there it was, spotted at 6:30 a.m., and rescued  
for a mere 5 dollars. Shit, I see the keyboard does not even  
boast a dollar sign! I also see by my typing that the lettered  
sleeve is not whipping around quickly enough on some of these  
freaking key strikes. What the fuck is going on here? I sure  
as shit cleaned this old bastard up well enough and oiled it,  
so that the "work" should be a little better than this.  
Then again, I should probably try to kick myself in my big ass,  
on Curt Scaglione's behalf. That poor bastard would surely  
suffer an anxiety fit if he saw me actually TYPING on this  
wonderful old machine.

Anyway, here's the keyboard on this beauty:

qwertyuiopasdfghjkl.zxcvbnm'6,CNEFTYUIONASZPCBJHL:ZXCVEN ?;!  
1234567890" \* ^ \_ ` ( ) + = < > / Aren't you glad you asked?



I was thinking of bringing the Hammond down there and hassling you to look up the history of the No. 12, but I've been too freaking broke to even afford gas until today, and unfortunately, I'm busy now, and can't.

I looked in my brown history book, and it shows a little picture of the 12, but no date, or history. A footnote in Dan Post's intro mentions that the early Hammond was the "Rolls-Royce" of pioneer typewriters. Unfortunately, I positioned a revolving toy display stand on top of the little table -- and the other typewriter books you let me copy -- and I'm unable to get to them. So I am screwed! When the heck was this machine made, Brotha Mike?

Found a lovely red-yellow-brown tin from the Art Deco age that shows a stylized version of the '20s-'30s office in a circle in the lid. Have you seen one? Neat. You can see a desk, wooden chair, file cabinet, chandelier, picture -- BUT NO TYPEWRITER. By the way, the only words on the whole affair are inside the lid sleeve that fits down on the tin: "DECORATED METAL."

Well, I guess that's enough bullshit for one day. I hope this cranky old machine begins to work better. Now that I begin hitting the keys a little less harshly, I see they are doing more of the work on their own!!! which probably accounts for that "Rolls-Royce" tag, right? Now if only the right key -- or rather, the right letters -- went onto the paper, I would be one much happier camper. I don't mind typing on these nice old machines, but when the receiver of the letter can't read it, there's trouble!!!

*and  
won't  
cost*

*I might see you next week Jack  
I must return 2 books to you. Do u have a junk part*

2-10-98

Bey, Mike!!!

Rummaging around on this freaking HUGE MOUND OF SHIT on my desk today, I came across the envelope with your first issue in it, & after checking it out, I must say you have alot to be proud of. What a yeoman effort! That motherfucker was just alive and busy as shit, and one helluva lot of fun. In some ways it was even better than Issue 2! (It didn't have any long & boring Bundy articles hogging all the pages!)

I haven't gotten to call Calif. or do any work on that Oldest Living Typewriter article yet, & will likely put it off until I get back from a trip to Fla. March 13-20. I imagine you've got a ton of stuff to put in May's issue anyway, right? If not, sound the alarm. This mother will truly be interesting.)

Keep the faith! If you talk to Curt, tell him I found an Underwood in New Jersey! Tell him he can have it for \$350!

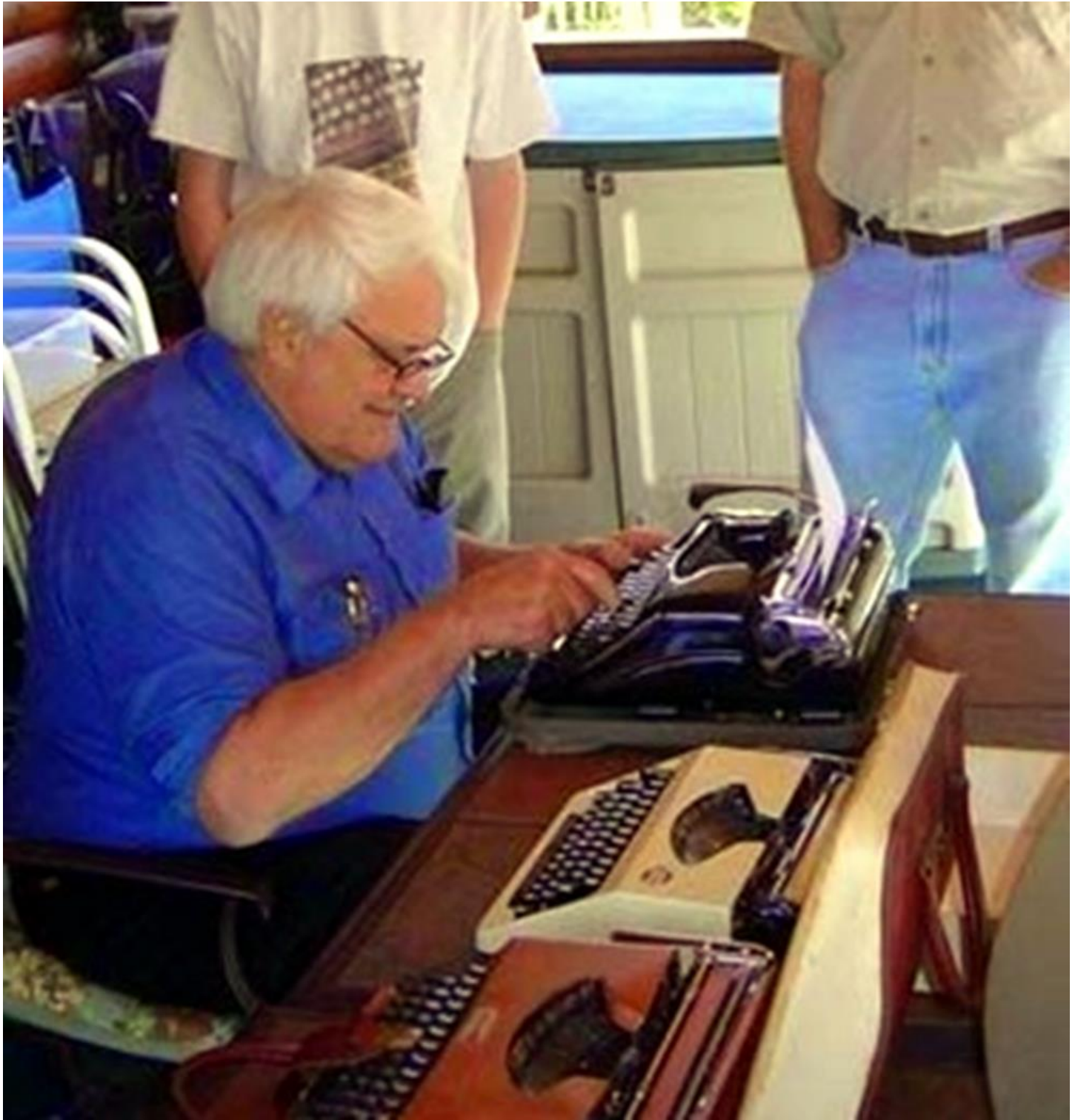
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack Krum". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.



Mike,

Just before I was going  
to mail this out, the  
latest copy of the  
Exchange arrived in the  
mailbox. And I went  
home and read it  
— to enjoy it, this time  
— and must say you  
have every reason to  
be proud. What a  
great issue. You  
have done it, you  
crazy bastard !!!

Jack Kuan





Hey, Mike!

Spotted this in the Jan 30  
Tradin' Times, and it  
sounded just like you!

Can you believe it?! How  
come you never told me  
about this incredible  
"famous" artist? You never  
said the Olivetti was the  
"Ferrari" of typewriters!

Shit, all I remember are  
big thick grey slugs!  
As scrap in a junkyard!

Khan

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105 Spruce Lane  
Southampton, NJ 08088-1751

Dear Mike,

Hey, dude, I just felt like popping you a note off my wonderous new Underwood Noiseless typewriter. What a giant beast! I feel like I've just cleaned and polished and started up a majestic old 1938 BUICK, for Christ's sake!

I'll tell you, this is the first typewriter in years that I have been moved to buy and fix up. It reminded me of the old days when it seemed like every week there was a new old machine to stir the interest. There it was, sitting on top of some vendor's piece of old furniture, big, dull, rusty. But it had that shocking quality to it that strikes a new collector often: I DIDN'T REMEMBER EVER SEEING ONE BEFORE!!! An Underwood Noiseless? I'd seen a ton of Remington Noiselesses. But here was my favorite brand, having obviously bought and sold a piece of that franchise as well.

Even though it is working well now, the guts are filled with grease and gobs of dust and probably rust. My can of that magic stuff you sold me once is empty, so I've got to get down and get another one if you still have stock.

DAVE K. BARR





105 Spruce Lane  
Southampton, NJ 08088-1751

Dear Mike,

Hey, dude, I just felt like popping you a note off my wonderous new Underwood Noiseless typewriter. What a giant beast! I feel like I've just cleaned and polished and started up a majestic old 1938 BUICK, for Christ's sake!

I'll tell you, this is the first typewriter in years that I have been moved to buy and fix up. It reminded me of the old days when it seemed like every week there was a new old machine to stir the interest. There it was, sitting on top of some vendor's piece of old furniture, big, dull, rusty. But it had that shocking quality to it that strikes a new collector often: I DIDN'T REMEMBER EVER SEEING ONE BEFORE!!! An Underwood Noiseless? I'd seen a ton of Remington Noiselesses. But here was my favorite brand, having obviously bought and sold a piece of that franchise as well.

Even though it is working well now, the guts are filled with grease and gobs of dust and probably rust. My can of that magic stuff you sold me once is empty, so I've got to get down and get another one if you still have stock.





I'm getting the car repaired this weekend and the mufflers fixed on Monday, so maybe I'll get down there on Tuesday to see you. Thanks for that copy of Type-Ex or whatever it was you sent in the mail; I read it cover to cover & saved it. Mr. Rehr does a good job, doesn't he? You do just as well, and you're only three issues in! By the way, we could "follow up" his first-computer story with a "Where's Univac Now?" piece. I forget. He must have mentioned it. Where IS Univac now? Still in existence? At the Smithsonian? Still at Penn?

Well, it's Saturday as this is written, and I'm heading up to NYC and Sotheby's auction house, where some of Burgess Meredith's stuff is going on the block (he was the old trainer in the Rocky movies, in case you'd forgotten). Maybe we'll see Sylvester Stallone. He'll likely be bidding by phone from Hollywood, however. I did a story once in Hollywood, Fla., about a Firestone tire dealer who was into movie memorabilia, and every time Rick Spector and his wife Cynthia hit New York or Atlantic City for an antique show, they give me a ring. He buys the weirdest shit. He's got a personal theater and museum at his home.

Well, I hope to see you soon after you read this!

The Worst,

Knarr





105 Spruce Lane,  
Southampton, NJ 08088-1751  
June 27, 1998

Hey, Michael,

Thanks a million for fixing me up with that rare Remington No. 6, pal. It is most appreciated. I haven't taken the time to screw around with it and clean it up, etc., but that promises to be a fun time when I get to it.

After about a three-year down time, my interest in old typewriters is returning, I guess, No. 1, because of getting involved in your great little publication. And I was lucky enough to run into a few good flea-market finds, the #6 box, a near-mint 1917 Underwood Standard (the keys are even fresh!) and that Underwood Noiseless. Granted these are all common things, but stuff I grew up with and probably worked on at newspapers in the late Sixties and Seventies.

Then on Thursday at the Columbus Farmers Market I came upon a big old fresh red IBM tank, the Executive, and I checked the typeface, and it was that generic/corporate that most all those tanks were equipped with. It was only \$10, but I left it there, and shopped on. I came back home, but about 1:30 in the afternoon I got a bug up my ass and drove back up there, to see if it had been



sold. Well, shit, everybody was gone -- the temperature was 95° and all the vendors had gone home. But I got to thinking, why on earth would I need another IBM Executive TANK when I already have one languishing on the back porch, open with the fucking cats having gnawed through the papers on top, filthy with all the HAIR they leave everywhere!

So I hauled it in here the other night, and spent a loving three hours just scrubbing down every inch of the bastard, making everything fresh again, oiling lightly what I could, cleaning crud out of crevices. It took about a hundred strikes per key to get everything working properly again, but here she is, pal: The best typewriter I ever had! Found in a TRASH CAN along the road in the countryside in mid-Jersey one morning in 1987 as I drove my son to work. I studied the carbon ribbon in it that day: Some stooges in a hunting club had tried to use it for minutes, or whatever, and we're able to handle the intricate different spacing for each letter. I'm so glad.

So anyway, I just thought you might want to see once again this machine's example of Heritage or Testimonial (TV) work, some of the most interesting I've ever seen anywhere!

Sincerely,



7-7-98

Jack Knarr  
105 Spruce Lane  
Southampton, NJ 08088-1751  
July 2, 1998

Dear Mike,

I know you're just DYING to see the boring corporate typeface of the standard IBM Executive "tank" typewriter, but here it is, baby. Fresh off some poor bastard's table at Columbus, for \$5. Wheeee.

I think I wrote you last week how that poor SOB had lugged this beast out in the hot sun, & how I'd gone back to get it at 1 p.m., only to find him gone. WELL, HE BROUGHT THE BEAST BACK THIS WEEK. So it's mine. Now I notice the back-spacer isn't, uh, working. It needs a little help from my left hand to PUSH, BECAUSE THE FUCKER IS STUCK IN THE SNOW!!!

AHA! I now notice that she has begun to work. I bet this is how all you "Master(bating) Mechanics" operate -- stab at it, hit it with Liquid Wrench, bend it, and chuckle yer ass off when you write up the bill!

Anyway, I thought it was pretty rare that I found one of these pigs relatively dust-free and with a carbon ribbon in it, and operating from the first turn-on. I notice the lines are damned straight, too.

Hey, I have to tell you, things are looking up for a change in the typewriter game. On Sunday I spotted an olive drab green Underwood, with an Army cunt cap draped on it, for \$45 (apparently a military deal from WWII). Today I saw a decent Royal with single windows, for a whopping \$45! YES!!! This is exactly what I've been waiting for, these old heaps to increase in value. Wait until the Yuppies and computer whizzes get excited about OLD IBM EXECUTIVES. Or ancient portable computers. I have a few of those miserable beasts, too. It's tough to quell the desire to throw the fuckers out in the trash. Some day I'll be so rich from the profit on those things, I'll be able to go to Manayunk!!!

When the hell are you going to get another issue of that little rag of your's sent over here? I'm dying to read it. That reminds me, I'm supposed to be writing to those check-writing machine people on your behalf. Well; maybe I'll haul my OTHER Executive up here, and do that one. Ain't nuttin' beats that wonderful Testimonial Type!

Well, you old dog, I hope you had a nice Fourth of July weekend!

Sin-cereely,



John G. (Jack) Knarr

PS -- Keep your good eyeball on the lookout for a wooden Remington #6 key that I can steal!!

August 7, 1998

Hello Dr. Jack Knarkian,

The Dr. of ~~dead~~ dead and dying typewriters. You see, I can't even type of this freaking monster. Hey.....but I'm trying.

This is one of your favorites....and it has your name on it.

When time allows, please send around to my house that hearse of yours... so this vintage machine can have a proper ride to the "morgue". What happens to it after that is your business.

You always mention typestyles....but like a dummy...I forget what kind is your favorite. I'm sure that this is not the one....this is one of those "Modern types" that you so dispise.

Here is a sample of PM typestyle  
1234567890-=qwertyuiop<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>asdfghjkl;'zxcvbnm,. /  
!@#\$%&\*()\_+QWERTYUIOP<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>ASDFGHJKL;"ZXCVBNM,. ?

All seems to be complete and working. (OH ! WOW!)

Thanks again for the help with TYPEX.

Listen this is enough B.S. for one letter ?

Take care and come see me when you can.

Fellow Typewriter Nut,

Mike "kooky" Brown  
official Editor of : All About Nothing



Aug. 11, 1998

Dear Rat Editor Bastard Typewriter Turd:::

Please take that disgusting IBM Executive Tank Bomber with the boring corporate typeface and put a rope around it, and tie the rope around yer scrawny little ankle, and go to the top of the Walt Whitman Bridge, and JUMP!

Seriously, thanks for the offer, but buyers of typewriters these days want MANUAL MACHINES, not electrics. When the Millennium Bug bites, & the electricity is shut down forever, people with manuals will be the only ones communicating, old pal. I told you you should have used manuals to compose that disgusting little rag you sneeze in every three months! Now whaddya gonna do?

Did I tell you that I found the neatest goddamned ribbon tin at the flea market a few months back -- an EllWood, done in woodgraining all around, with yellow lettering, and an Underwood typewriter in the middle set in a world globe. It's obviously Underwood's own ribbon company. "Speed the World's Business." Just beautiful, for \$12. I now have three of my favorite typewriters -- Remington, IBM and the Underwood -- on ribbon tins. I'm looking for the Smith-Premier and the Oliver. Have you got any doubles you could sell at a reasonable price? (None of this \$300 shit, Bob)

OVER ↓ Jack K.

105 Spruce Lane  
Southampton, NJ 08088-1751  
Sept. 15, 1998

Yo, Mad Dog!

I am happy to report that I SAW and BOUGHT my very first Bundy ribbon tin, an imperfect gold-and-blue baby for \$3. You're right, his figure looks just like it does on the letter-head.

I also must report that your legend is spreading. I just met somebody from Connecticut who bought a tin off you. Damned sneaky weird typewriter collectors. Strange.

The story goes like this: I was at Lambertville, selling stuff at the antique-and-collectibles flea market, and I had a few old typewriters for sale, including an Oliver from 1912 that has started to rust on one side, for a mere \$35, and a WRECKED Remington 16 for \$5 that a week earlier had been abandoned at the same market.

Anyway, these two women stop by, and check out the Oliver, & confer, and question the rust, & I tell them if the rust weren't there, it'd be a \$65 typewriter, & that's why it's \$35, & with a little Liquid Wrench & some fine sandpaper, or some Wenol, why the stuff literally could be made to disappear.



Well, they confer, & decide it's still too much for them, & move on. They might be back. Sure. No hair off my ass.

So an hour later, they're back, and the one says, "Would you take \$20 for the Oliver?"

I looked at her with distain. "Twenty dollars for a \$35 typewriter?"

"Yeah."

"I might go \$30, no less."

"Twenty-two?"

"No."

"Twenty-five?"

"No!"

"Come on, you said '\$30!'"

"Thirty it is."

She thought and thought and finally said, "Twenty-seven," and I said, "THIRTY!" And then I say, "Oh shit, 27, go ahead!" And I said, "And take that Remington for another \$5." And she said, "Would you take \$3?" And I blew up. "I wouldn't take THIRTY, now!" And she said, "Okay, \$5." And I shouted to the next vendor, "I EMBARRASSED HER! SHE'S GOING TO GIVE ME WHAT I ASKED!"

Aug. 31, 1998

Hey, Mike!

You crazy whacky bastard!!! You didn't have to do that! Now I owe you \$20 again! Seriously, what a surprise. I forgot to tell you though that I only collect tins with typewriters on them. Now you'll have me branching out, looking for MORE SPACE CRACKS in this stuffed, dusty, museum/bedroom! I was trying to keep some CONTROL of the tin possibilities. Now its edging toward being out of control.

Neatest of all was the color copy of That Tin. Soon I'm going to put the best 8 or 10 in a little car model display case, & I'm always looking for a background, something to back the box, & that's part of it, pal. YES!

I miss going in to the old store. Are you going buggy yet being constantly at home? What you need is a nice expensive little place next to a computer store in a yuppie place, trendy place, where you could sell extravagantly-priced oddball antiques & office [desk] stuff-- not a hole in boring Cottman Avenue. Those slickos with money would never come off the Main Line to visit Cottman Avenue, right?

I just wrote to Curt looking for info on where to get 3/16th-inch staples for that great turn-of-the-century stapler I got this week. I hope there is a source; I hate to have antiques that aren't operable.



I've been attending the auction near here on Saturday mornings, & I wonder if you have any interest at all in the very clean but pretty common machines that come out of these estates. Examples from the past three weeks: Green military crinkle Olympia, mint, \$1; '60 Royal red-button two-tone grey [I was cabitzing & missed the bid, & paid the guy \$6 for the thing afterwards; I took it home, & find it is practically off the assembly line, tight, nice, & mint], a Hermes 10 electric, 75¢, and a Royal 440 or whatever that '60s or '70s square jobbie was, on huge metal stand, for \$1. The Selectrics are all over, for \$3 to \$25. Is there anything at all you want me to watch for? I know, I know, but if the sewing machine Remington shows up, it goes in the back of the hearse. I wonder what that would go for up there? I wonder if anybody would know what it really is? I'm sure it'd bring a few hundred just for it's antiequey looks, but who knows?

Well, I've got to get to work. Thanks again, you rat. I had none of those tins. STORY NOTE FOR THE NEAR FUTURE: Get off all those "pretty" tins, pal, & start reproducing the tins we really care about, the ones with typewriters on them! A thought: Instead of "wasting" them all in one or two issues, have a department, the true "Type Writer Tin of the Month." Of course, then, you hound dog, you'd have to go MONTHLY! YES!



105 Spruce Lane  
Southampton Twp., N.J. 08088-1751  
Oct. 27, 1998

Yo, Mike!!!

Thanks again for all those ribbon tins, you crazy ole cop! I forgot to tell you I only collect ones with typewriters on them, so I threw the rest of them out. Seriously, that reminds me, did I tell you about the tin I saw at Atlantique City that had an Adler adding machine on it, a pic of a woman operating it. I think that's what it was. I put it on my list of things to get if I had any money left, which I didn't. I think it was a \$40-to-\$90 deal.

I didn't see any tins at Lambertville on Sunday. I just had to get the hell out of the house, and what a beautiful day it was to tramp around outside.

What I did see for the first time, though, was a Remington 21 typewriter with an adding device BUILT IN the front, and a tall paper table! I was going to call you in case you wanted it, but the greedy bastard that had it for sale wanted \$250, which I thought was even a little steep for a deep-pockets guy like you. What would you go tops on that? Drop me a line, & I'll offer it to this yo-yo, if you want the machine.

You might kill me for this one, though: I bypassed a Burroughs calculator for a mere \$20. I only had \$60 in my pocket to last me the next ten days (fat chance), so I wasn't in a spending mood. But I knew that flat bank of numbered keys was a nice and early example of a mechanical calculator. No paper involved-- no roll or table or printing or any of that. Just a calculator. I guess I should have bought it. If it shows up again, do you want it?

So we-- my crippled old neighbor, Jeannie Orschler-- leave the flea market, and I give her a choice of where to eat Sunday brunch, and instead of Cat-man-du in Trenton on the river (try it!) she picked the Stockton Inn, so we headed up through a back street in Lambertville toward Stockton, a little town about two miles to the north, and suddenly I spot a file cabinet at the curb, and other stuff piled there, so I hit the brakes and back up, and there also is an IBM typewriter, so I get the hell out.

It's a correcting Selectric II, and alongside it was a bag, a shopping bag, containing FORTY fresh correctible carbon ribbons! Tacked on a little tree there is a little sign: "FREE." Yeeks! The fucking typewriter looks fresh, too: No wear marks. Whatthefhell ...

Now, I've just had stomach surgery, and have been ordered NOT TO LIFT ANYTHING for six weeks. But I've been wearing a very strong and serious belt around the midsection, so I maneuvered the machine so I could lift it with little trouble, and quickly got it into Jeannie's van. They tape up an operation these days-- no stitches or staples, at least in my stomach-- and I didn't feel any tape break loose, heh heh. What the hell, I'm not gonna let a FREE TYPEWRITER go to the trashman!



I had my son haul it in the house, and plugged it in. (He said, "Dad, there's screws rattling around in here, is something broke?" and my heart sank. This must be a busted machine.)

And all the keys were sticking, and the ball-carrying part under the hood wouldn't move, and something was howling in there, but I forcibly pushed it back in the middle, and started hitting the keys, and I put a line of oil down that groove where you can see all the key joints under the "hood," and pretty soon, it's beginning to spring gradually to life. It took about 20 minutes to get all the letters working properly, but goddamn, now everything works OK, except the self-correcting X button and the back-spacer. There never was a clear correcting ribbon in the machine, so who knows about that. I wish the back-spacer worked, but it's not that big a deal. If I make a typing mistake, I simply correct it as I did with the old machine you're working on for me: With white correcting paper. I hit the back-spacer once while at the same time pushing the ball-carrying "truck" backwards, and push it back one space. I have an idea that one of these days, as I type a letter in continuing use, the back-spacer might spring into action, too. The machine hasn't been used in 22 months (I checked the carbon ribbon; the last thing written on it was some woman's car accident report). So I guess with inactivity, the machine's various functions stiffen up and get balky, where with continuing use, they might still be working well. It's like yer goddamned pecker, if you don't keep it in use, you might suffer a clog-up. (Which might explain this weird feeling I have ... )

So anyway, Mike, I've got to get busy and start WORKING again, something I dread. Sitting around doing nothing and taking Percocets is my idea of a nice time, and for the first time in YEARS I have a bottle of Percocets for the pain, heh heh. YES!!! Anyway, let me know if you want any of those machines, and I'll grab them up next time I see them, or give the guys your phone number, or get their number for you. Let me know. And thanks again for those great tins! Now where the HELL am I going to put THAT display?!!

*Jask*

105 Spruce Lane  
Southampton Twp., NJ 08088-1751  
March 5, 1999

Dear Mike,

Just got back from a 10-day trip to Florida. Didn't see a single typewriter the whole way, and there were days late in the trip where I got itchy to use one, too.

I shouldn't say I didn't see one, because I took a mint Underwood 5 down to my mother's man. I'd promised him the thing for a year. He never wanted anything in the way of a gift, but being a retired plant engineer for Florida Steel, he expressed an interest in an antique typewriter. So I took one down to Tampa, and gave it to him ... and later on that very same day we got into a huge screaming F-ing fight, and I just HAD to leave the house and go away and sleep in the hearse, and that lovely No. 5, that I'd spent hours waxing, etc., is no longer in my position. I'm sort of hoping the dumb Polock blockhead was so pissed off, he mailed it back, but I'm sure the sheer problem of shipping the thing, preparing it for shipping, was daunting. Maybe he figures I'll apologize yet again by mail, but I didn't. I wrote and told him he was at fault for treating me the way he did. (And hey, I guess I'm a Kraut blockhead, which has it all over the Poles any day, heh heh.)

ANYWAY, I wanted to write and thank you for sending that Internet stuff about old newspaper offices. It's hard to believe, but all those things mentioned -- ticker-tape wire machines, manual typewriters, pneumatic tubes -- were in existence and being used



at the papers I was at up through 1973. Then we got these Selectric IIs, I guess they were, and special paper, and you had to type perfect, or use exact correcting codes as you made insertions, so a reading computer out back could fix things as it scanned the paper. What a mess. Thank God that only lasted a year or two until the screened machines came in.

A couple of quick things:

Thanks for what appears to be an Internet list of typewriter collectors that you sent with the Yesterday's Office stuff. But I have to tell you it's no good to me, as I'm not on the damned Internet yet and don't have a computer capable of access. I was hoping to possibly write up the Top Ten collectors the old fashioned way, by typing out a common letter customized to each, getting a bunch of info back from each by mail, and topping that off with a half-hour phone interview before writing a package on each. We could break out little chunks on each: "My Top Ten Typewriters," and "Why I Collect," etc., etc. But I need snail-mail addresses, you weasel. I can't reach these bastards otherwise. I wish I had more time, I should go to the library and sign up for a class, and learn the Internet, etc., and reach them that way. Maybe next year.

Also, I realize those IBM beasts I left at your house are probably taking up valuable space, so I want to come over and pick them up. Forget the key replacement. I'm going to wait until I find the next mint Executive at the flea market, one that's operating perfectly, and then bug you to switch in the old valuable

Testamonial key set. Does that sound like a plan? At the same time I'd like you to fix the backspacer on this Selectric II -- you said it was an easy fix, & quick -- and then take you out for a goddamned lunch. You work too hard, maggot, and need a break. Set a date and time -- anytime's fine, if I know in advance -- and I'll chug over there in this wonderful hearse. Tell yer old lady I'll leave the mattress in if she wants to take you out to the Drive-In movies!

Jack



105 Spruce Lane  
Southampton NJ 08088-1751  
March 14, 1999

Hey, Mike,

It's a great day to stay inside & screw around with typewriters & letter-writing, etc. By the way, thanks again for your maintenance work on this Selectric II -- and your advice, since, indeed, the 'A' did stick open, & I had to get in there and jerk off its little lever, heh heh. Also, thanks for getting this application in the right hands. The top one is just slightly better, but either will do. I didn't know whether you needed both or not, so here they are, bruther. Hmm ... \$485. There better be some hot young promiscuous babes servicing my shack down there, heh heh.

Thanks.  
Jack

105 Spruce Lane  
Southampton Twp., NJ 08088-1751  
May 28, 1999

Dear Mr. Typewriter Man,

I hope you go BLIND and CROSS-EYED trying to read this discombobulated typing that you refused to fix. I hope you had to work 50 hours over this holiday weekend alone, heh heh.

I got this embarrassing beast from its filthy perch outside on the ~~porch~~ porch, because another wonderous IBM elephant I just bought for 25¢ went South, too (the ribbon advancer stopped advancing). Anyway, I thought you'd enjoy reading the saga (enclosed).

Seriously, I hope you're not working too damned hard, ~~and~~ and that you had a nice holiday weekend! By the way, I haven't even thought about that letter I was ~~going~~ going to write to the TopTen Collectors (sorry, Mike; I haven't been able to even think about filing my income tax, either, and that's only six weeks late & counting). So I guess I'm joining that vast rabble of collector/author/derelects who keeps promising things and peters out in the clutch. Again, sorry. Better days are ahead.

Jack





Mary Beaumont (left) of Tabernacle and Doris Dobovich of Hainesport hold hands after they placed flowers at the grave of their brother, Carlton Alcott Jr., at Beverly National Cemetery yesterday. Their brother was killed on the last day of World War II at the age of 21. The cemetery will be decorated with an avenue of flags for Memorial Day to honor the nation's war dead this weekend.

was injured.

The tank was apparently delivered with a load of wood and deposited into the county's massive wood shredder for processing, according to county spokesman Ralph Shrom.

The county recycles scrap wood and uses the chips in its composting operation and as landfill cover, Shrom said.

The 9:10 a.m. explosion caused a small fire inside the shredder, which recycling staff quickly extinguished, he said.

The explosion was loud and strong enough to be heard and felt

sterned it. A police spokesman said. Police found metal fragments believed to be from a common, household propane tank.

"We take wood from all sources. How it got mixed in is anyone's guess," Shrom said.

The interior of the \$500,000 shredder, which Shrom said about 60 feet long and about 10 feet high, was damaged in the explosion. County officials will need to rent another one while it is being repaired, he said.

Two operators standing near the shredder were not hurt, he said.

# Unraveling the mystery of typewriter's history

At Nixon's auction in Springfield Saturday, I bought an old IBM typewriter for 25 cents, and lugged it home, and began writing a letter on it to a friend in Florida. "I can't wait for the carbon film ribbon on this beast to run out," I told her, "so I can go take it out, and unravel it to the beginning, and read what the original owner of this typewriter once wrote."

Noisy people know you can hold a used carbon ribbon up to the light, and read everything that had ever been typed on it. Unfortunately, most of the stuff is boring as

in. "Just once," I wrote, "I'd like to find something interesting."

Incredibly, one paragraph later, the typewriter broke down. So I took the ribbon out, and began reading it.

The last item, written diary-style on Feb. 9, 1989, stated, "I am so dissatisfied with myself and my writing. I know I should be getting more pages done in my book, but I've stalled."

I wanted to stand and cheer. I had found

a writer! Her name was LaVonne Camp of Moorestown. She said her husband Art was out shopping for a word processor she could use. Quickly, I wound the tape back, like a time machine. LaVonne wrote that she'd always written best with pen and paper. She agonized over how best to get her story rolling:

"I need to probe deeper to bring forth some of the thoughts and feelings that were mine at that early age, in that strange land, under wartime circumstances."

"How can I make it come alive? How can I make the reader want to go on to see how things turn out? Perhaps the best way is to concentrate on the story as a love story. It was really that. I had fallen so smotheringly in love with Art, the pilot of one of those sturdy C-47s."

Immediately I felt a deep, loving kinship

with this stranger. She had been a wartime nurse overseas, and in 1989 she had returned to nursing at a home for the elderly.

She wrote that she was appalled how much medicine doctors were prescribing — had they forgotten that the elderly could enjoy seven or eight decades of life with "exercise, a proper diet, and most of all, a positive outlook on life."

Sadly, she noted that nurses now did the work a doctor used to do, and doctors were doing the work God used to do. She wrote a magazine article urging families to keep their aging parents home.

"It would be wonderful to have someone to love," she wrote, "and folks to love you."

Her name nagged at my memory. Had I met this woman? I remembered meeting a tiny white-haired woman author one day in 1997 at Waldenbooks at the Burlington Center. I couldn't remember her name.

But BCT Columnist Dan Schweikert — who was also there that day — had bought her book. "Her name is LaVonne Telshaw

Camp," he said. "The book is 'Lingering Fever, a World War II Nurse's Memoir.' "That's her!" I shouted. "The typewriter was hers!"

But then my joy turned to sorrow. If LaVonne's old typewriter had turned up at Nixon's auction, she might have just died. "I haven't seen her out," said Dan.

The next morning, I called a number she had typed in the tape.

And guess who answered the telephone? Sweet LaVonne Camp, 73 now, but her voice — her laughter — as alive and fresh as now crystal.

LaVonne was amazed at why I was calling. The IBM had been given away to a neighbor years ago, and the neighbor had just moved; hence, it's trip to Nixon's.

She and Art, married 52 years, are doing fine, and so is the book. I found it at the library, loaded with stories, and pictures of the way they were. It's in its fourth printing now.

Jack Knarr's human interest column appears in the Burlington County Times three days a week.



Jack Knarr Columnist

STORY IDEAS: CALL THE NEWS DESK 871-8054, GARY LINDENMUTH, ASSOCIATE EDITOR



105 Spruce Lane,  
Southampton Twp., NJ  
08088-1751  
June 20, 1999

Hey, Mike!

When I saw the cover of this "Far Side" collection, I thought of your hooves, and the, uh, unrestrained typography of that wacky Type-Ex, heh heh.

Actually, the jammed-up typewriter -- signifying no more cartoons, folks -- is the perfect cover for Gary Larson's last "Far Side." As I riffled through it, in that great little used bookstore on South Street, the other day, I realized how much I miss the cartoon in the paper every day.

I visited Bob Aubert last week, No. 1, to give him a Hammond ribbon spool cover I found that went with a typewriter I sold him about 6 months ago. And No. 2, to pick up a big bunch of copies of Darryl Rehr's publication, to copy & read. But at the last minute, the fucker said he'd loaned them to some guy in Yardley. Right.

Anyway, I thought it would be good to propose I write him up as one of our top collectors, and craft a package based on him for your next issue, featuring many of those things you & I talked about. But he didn't seem keen on that at all. In fact, he claimed he's getting out of the typewriter-collecting business. I thought if I'd do him up, I'd have a clipping of a package with which to approach the other more difficult collectors for their stories & info. I'll ask him again soon. He was in bad shape. His wonderful little dog developed cancer and died after several weeks of expensive and intensive treatment and heartbreak, and him and Florence were down in the dumps. Wally was really a neat dog, too. Hope Aubert gets another pooch, just to lift his spirits.

Oh yeah, the other story idea I thought you (or I) should address in the next issue was the end of Ye Olde Office, the California outfit that sold old office machines. Aubert says it went under. Too bad, they had a beautiful catalogue. It'd be neat to talk to whomever started that up,



Hey, Mike,

Thought as long as I was mailing the auction stuff over, I might as well include the copy of the calender, and give you as much time to screw around with it as possible. From what you say about the Internet pictures already used, this might be one of the few exclusive things we have that Chuck & Dipstick didn't rob. And I'll bet there is a snapshot of the calender on there already, isn't there?

I guarantee one thing, at the next convention, we're going to come armed with a Nikon, & not rely on any competitors for pictures. They made fools of us with the Web publication of those group pics. What do Rich & Chuck do for a living, anyway? Are they professional collectors? Maybe that explains why they have so freaking much time to get a leg up on the rest of us working stiffs.

Well, let's at least hope this issue gets out soon, without errors, and enough pizzazz to blow some smoke back up their asses.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jack Krum". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.





MIKE -

7-9-2000

The main auction story  
had to be re-labeled MAIN,  
due to sending problems  
with the modem. Likewise  
the Sale-Swap story, now  
slugged MEET.

Most everything can  
be cut to fit, particularly  
from the middle (my  
rolls are too big, heh heh).

See you at midnight  
Wednesday to go to  
Brimfield. Bring cameras.

Jack  
over →

1. MAIN on auction
2. MEET - sales / swap action
3. LAMBERT
4. TINTALK cut at will
5. CONTEST typing contest  
can be heavily cut  
+ rewritten!
6. RATING
7. BREKER
8. LEWIS (on cleaning  
+ restoration)
9. MUSEUM (to Russo's)

chunks  
can be  
cut  
without  
opening



NOTE -

The quote marks might be a little confusing in the copy. "You know, he said, 'There might be confusion,'" Bill said. "But Mike said, 'No problem. I'm an experienced editor now!'"

You know which way to make them point, don't you? Or do the quote marks on your machine just go up + down like this? "

P.S. I hope this disc eats you alive!

105 Spruce Lane  
Southampton Twp., NJ  
July 28, 1999

hello, you old dog!

Your incredible gift of the copies of "Etcetera" has affected me to such an extent that I've actually hauled down an old type-writer to screw around with! And what a great time it's been!

I'd had a gully remembrance of this wonderful old Oliver No. 11 -- it had actually fallen from a 5-foot high shelf on which it had been stored: I had an awful BANG one day and rushed into the bedroom, and saw this wonderful machine had crashed to the floor, along with some other things. And after I examined it, and found no breaks, I was slightly relieved: Perhaps it had crashed against something else on the way down, cushioning the blow. But it didn't type right. The line of typing was like the water on the ocean. I couldn't fix it. But at least it wasn't broken. I put it back up. Maybe my old pal Mike Brown could take a look at it someday.

Then today, as I'm ripping through the third book of those copies that you so graciously made, I needed to get the feel of a really old machine -- no 1957 Royal (as I had been using recently) would do. And the only one I could really get at easily was the Oliver 11.

Well, of course, you can see I got it right after all, using one of your old basic typewriter techniques, of



lining each key strike up alongside a strike of the "n" key. I discovered the "butterfly wing" on the left side had been bumped in the fall, and straightened it out, and gently bent each key to match up alongside the "n."

There is still a discrepancy in lineage between the CAP line and the first line of strikes, but I'm sure there's an adjustment to be made easily somewhere. I just wanted to drop you a line and thank you for getting me interested in this dying hobby once again.

By the way, I came across a great concise little article in "ETCetera" about the differences -- and similarities of the IBM Selectric, and the Blick, by none other than MIKE BROWN. You used to be a very disciplined writer! And whatever happened between you and Mr. Rehr? Guess he screwed you somehow. Too bad. You guys might have made a great team on "ETCetera."

I think I'll drop Curt a note, on a real typewriter, and maybe he'll shit a brick like I did when he wrote! Incredibly, Curt's letter was in HAND-WRITING!!! I am constantly puzzled by you typewriter collectors. You publish by COMPUTER, and writer letters BY HAND. You know, I seem to remember you reviving with a few hand-written notes, too. Let me just hit myself on the noggin with a little ball peen hammer!!!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jack K.", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

105 Spruce Lane,  
Southampton Twp., NJ 08088-1751  
Aug. 31, 1999

Dear Mike,

Hey, thanks so much for sending me the copies of your A.P. Little's ribbon tins. I imagine that's what was scratched out of the circle on the right. Whatever was in there was slightly smaller than the face you copied, but I stuck "your" face in there anyway because it looked right, and kept a copy, down-sized by halfway, glued to the ribbon "shuttle" inside the outer container. What a freaking neat package! It looks so much better with the paper copies in place, and if I ever sell or trade the tin to someone else (like yourself!) who would rather have the authentic bare scratched metal, heh heh, well, all I have to do is soften and peel off the paper. My true hope is to find a similar tin that does have the right face in, and copy that

Man, my meager little ribbon tin collection just looks great, pal. You've gotten me to branch out slightly. I did find an impressive art deco tin with a woman looking in side profile into a mirror -- a gold tin with an orange-and-black design -- and the slogan "YOU WILL LOOK YOUR BEST ALWAYS" along the bottom. It's a KeeLox Wonder Brand for a "Rem VISIBLE." There were two others at the flea market: they were \$10 each, if you're interested. I'd still much rather have a tin showing the picture of a typewriter on it. Have any extras of those you want to sell?

Also, I'm enclosing a little money to help pay for that incredible and much-appreciated copying job you did on all the issues of KTCetora, and my Checkwriter copy, and those copies of the ribbon tin, and all the postage -- hell, even the chair I've been sitting on all these months and years since you closed up shop, came out of your place as a gift.



THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, and THANK  
YOU AGAIN!!!

I devoured all those copies of ETCetera, and answered a few ads (your pal Darryl wants \$25 to \$35 for original sheets of stationary from the typewriter manufacturers, the greedy bastard). I also got itchy to work on one of my typewriters, and hauled out a rusty, almost hopeless old Underwood that had "Manufactured by the Wagner Typewriter Co." stencilled on the back, with patent pending dates of 1890 through 1899. The serial number is in the 10,000s and Bob Aubert helped date it at about February (the end) of 1900. So I took it in to his place one evening, and we got a new ribbon on it and a carriage drawstring, and he oiled the spring (sorry: he greased it). I hadn't oiled or hit the innards with any solvent, and when I did that later at home, I got it to work halfway. In other words, the bastard would only type halfway across and then drag and stop. And I checked EVERYWHERE, and couldn't figure out how to make it work fully. I remembered I have that Underwood Model 1 that you sold me, so I dug that out, and looked at how the works are supposed to work. But, by the time I gave up three days later, it wasn't working AT ALL. And I was damned frustrated. I'd stuck a screwdriver in and tried to bend things right. And I made it worse, dammit. Oh well, such is life. I was trying to get it going on my own, you know. That fucker Aubert is such a professional, though. He says, "Bring it in: what you made wrong I can make right." Guess I shouldn't feel bad, though. He really is a dedicated typewriter guy. The night I was in, he had acid and nickle on the stove, and he had just finished replating a bunch of parts, I think for a Smith-Premier 4 that he'd gotten roped into restoring for somebody. I just wanted to get a drawstring and ribbon and get outta there, but before you knew it, he said, "C'mon. I'm gonna teach you how to replate," and he had the ruler off the front of the Model 1, and re-did it! It's amazingly good work, too -- not chromy splashy dazzling, but virginal and shiny as I imagine

it probably really was when it was built in the first place. Then he even cleaned and blued the screws that held the ruler on, as it appeared they were in the beginning. Interesting.

The numerous articles he wrote for ETCetera also impressed the hell out of me. There are some really good people in the typewriter-collecting game. I really had great fun reading all that stuff.

Anyway, tomorrow (Wednesday) we're heading up to Allentown, where Aubert has a father, and has done research on the Allen typewriter, and is going to show me that collection, etc. Should be fun. Plus he knows an old buck that gives \$3 haircuts yet, f'crissakes. Guy must be stuck in the Forties.

Well, hope you're feeling better now that your summer job is over and you can get back to normal life.

*Thanks again!*  
*Jack*

PS -- No, I haven't looked at Word One of that terrible load of Typewriters For The Blind shit (WHY WHY WHY WHY did I agree to DO that???) but I am going to try to sniff out a great story I heard from a woman at my newspaper, about a friend of her aunt in Florida, who bought a Ford typewriter at a yard sale or flea market, in pieces, because she had a hunch, and wound up hosting a gang-bang eight-man bidfest on the Internet that culminated in a \$14,800 sale!



105 Spruce Lane  
Southampton Twp., NJ 08088-1751  
Oct. 17, 1999

Hey, Mike,

I'm up to my ass, so I just dropped this in the mail Monday morning. I wanted to come over. But next time, pal. (I wrote two columns on a stack of old love letters found in an attic over here, and while they were OK, I wanted to do a full-length magazine article for somebody before I returned the letters to the current home-owner, who plans to allow both families in to see them. The letters are from 1902-6. Sadly, heh heh, none are typewritten.)

After reading this issue, I am now in TOTAL HATRED of all Caligraph 1s, and if I EVER meet either Jim Raucn or Jos Legrand at a gathering, I'm going right for both their throats. I am now so totally confused about big & little, nosed & blunt, rickety and good No. 1s that I wanna DUMP 'EM ALL IN THE FUCKING OCEAN!!!

Thanks for the ad in the back requesting an IBM Testimonial for me! Wouldn't this be freaking amazing if somebody actually responds? Nobody will, of course. These big buck stiffs that you hang out with that collect \$10,000 machines wouldn't look down their nose at one of my tanks. (Shit, I can't even get my favorite repairman to put a part in, for big bucks-- and he knows how to do it, too!)

Hey, seriously, as your alleged associate editor, I wish you'd mentioned what was going in this issue, because I have one quick suggestion: I know you've spent a ton of time on it. And I know it looks great. The front cover is truly sweet: Inventive, colorful, with a wonderful headline. (If you only knew English, heh heh, you could have been a writer or an editor.) But I wish you would have sat back a moment earlier and looked at

this "SPECIAL END-OF-CENTURY EDITION," and included, up-front, the knee-jerk story that every editor is going to include in every publication:

- The 10 most significant TWs of the century!
- The 10 most successful!
- The 10 most collectible!
- Ten clunkers that Knarr would only collect!

I know this is very easy for me to say, but you could, without a problem other than number and date changes, save this issue and publish it in February. And do a quick, violent, colorful, fun-filled re-do, using your massive archives to fill, and have it done in two weeks. I'm sure Curt could do a quick article of one of the above, and I could do the "clunkers" story (an area of my expertise, heh heh). And you or how about Aubert could crank out the others. It'd be fun!

Maybe you're sick of millennium lists & wanna forget it. Maybe you could just do it in February, for that issue, if you're totally fried now. Maybe you'd rather just save Tony Casillo's two-page story on the Eagle & fill with millennium stuff.

I can promise that if you want to do something emergency-style, I can get a clunkers story to you in two days at a phone call's notice. Or I can do it for February. Or - if you don't like the ideas at all, please don't give it a second thought, it's no work off my hide, heh heh.

Hey, nice issue. Thanks for publishing Rauen's address; now I know where to send the letter bombs. That fucker. Why didn't he get interested in collecting USED AUTOMOBILE TIRES, or something else interesting?





105 Spruce Lane  
Southampton Twp., NJ 08088-1751  
Jan. 29, 2000

Iley Mike!

I saw all those lies you told in the Daily News the other day, you bastard! You didn't tell them about the big summer home at the shore, or the fancy dance programs you help put on, or that extravagant typewriter publication you publish!!

Seriously, you shudda conned the guy into coming out to take a picture at your incredible museum/showroom!!!!!! Now that would have been a good picture, not that tired shit of Morris Gordon leaning over some tired plasticized piece of shit.

And you know what I realized reading that? The typewriter isn't really dead – it has just taken on a new form in the computer, which is where everybody TYPES their e-Mails, letters, etc., now. For some of its time, the computer acts as today's typewriter.

You know, part of me feels like such an old fart, switching typing balls in and out of this battered [but wonderful] Composer.

But another part, the one that watches Stupid Humans perform their tricks on the computer, just has to laugh and laugh and laugh.

There was a story on TV tonight about how rumor has taken flight over how Kentucky Fried Chicken no longer has actual *chicken* in its KFC menu, that some sort of genetically reproduced CRAP is used. Apparently there are many websites on the 'Net dealing with this whole issue, with the bottom line

that— of course— real chicken IS used. For Christ's sake, how *utterly stupid* can human beans be?

You know, the more and more I think about it, the more I realize that I really do not need the human gang-bang of the Internet.

Where the hell is that February issue? By now, it IS February, you miscreant!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jack K.", followed by a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that extends to the right.





105 Spruce Lane  
Southampton Twp., NJ 08088-1751  
Dec. 7, 1999

Hey, Mike,

Hope you're feeling better by now. On the other hand, you never knew you actually had so much *free time* available, right?

Here's the Tony Casillo story of buying the Ford off the Internet. He didn't want to name the asshole who has three Fords, and who bidden him up into the \$15,400 zone, or get into that back-stabbing, shit-slinging side of the collector hobby, so I wrote it up nice. I know you're harried, so I tried to make the copy publication-ready in case you just wanted to feed it into a scanner and fill pages without sweat. But of course do what you want. Remember that Tony has a picture of Linda, his wife, with the Ford; you two can communicate on how best to send it, if you want to use it to illustrate the piece. And seriously, if you are backed up on copy, and have promised the space to that other researcher, this piece can probably be held until May. Then again, there would be *mold* on it by then. Let Tony know if that's what you're going to do. Thanks.

I'll try to get hacking on the "Knarr's Klunkers" story. But my kid's going in to Temple Dec. 16 for knee surgery, and I *must* get busy next week and clean up this dump, so he can get around in here on his crutches.

*Jack*

The woman, an antiques dealer from Avon, Conn., was knocking about all afternoon that day, stopping at estate sales and such, when she came upon an odd, disassembled typewriter. This was on the last day of this sale. The carriage was off the machine. Nobody wanted it.

"It was all in pieces," said a source of mine. "But the woman who was selling it said to her, 'I guarantee that all the pieces are here.' She wanted \$50 for it, and she [the dealer] kind of like thought about it."

The strangeness of the little machine piqued her interest; it barely looked like a typewriter at all, with the word "FORD" stamped on the metal latticework facade. And it was obviously old; she figured she could at least get her money back out of it.

"So she took it," said my friend Martha. "She had no idea what it was. But she managed to get it all back together, I think, except for a couple of pieces, and photographed it, and put it on eBay."

"And she set the price for the first bid rather low, at \$75 or \$100, not much more than she paid for it."

"And the bidding just *TOOK OFF!*"

Yes it did. For Internet illiterates (myself included), eBay is an on-line auction, a world-wide website. And the Ford, a rare little classic typewriting "Duesenberg" if there ever was one, had been pulled out of the proverbial barn, and set in the sunny storefront window to the world!

An antiques dealer in Florida that I know described the action: "There were several under-bidders on it; it wasn't like one person said, 'Whoa, I really want it.' They *all* wanted it, and the bidding immediately went to \$5,000."



And it went straight up from there."

Good grief.

One of the bidders was a good friend of Type Ex, contributor Tony Casillo, 44, one of the last of the old breed of typewriter mechanics, who operates TTS Business Products in Garden City, Long Island, N.Y.

"I've been in the business over 25 years," he said, "but I wasn't plugged into the collector network until 1990. I always wanted a Ford; always someone would outbid me.

"Suddenly one morning I was having my coffee, checking the Internet, and lo and behold it was there. I saw the word 'FORD.' And it didn't say 'automobile' after it.

"Seconds later came the picture. The reserve was \$300. I immediately placed a bid."

This sweet little 3-row, forward thrust action machine was patented by inventor E. A. Ford in 1892 and made in 1895 by the Ford Typewriter Co. of New York (with no connection to Henry, thank you). The frame and that lovely old facade were crafted of all aluminum – and sometimes all iron, as this one was.

But Michael Adler, author of the 1997 Schiffer book, "Antique Typewriters, From Creed to QWERTY," has this advice for collectors who fall under the Ford's spell:

"You will probably need to go to at least \$5,000 or more for this interesting machine, although occasionally inflated prices as much as two to three times higher have been reported."

And indeed, after a week of nerve-wracking bidding, Tony Casillo made one last killer bid of \$15,400. And won the Ford.

"I got in my car and drove to Connecticut, and paid for it, and drove home," he said. The Ford parts were in a cardboard box. They were

well-preserved, with a few incidentals missing, but nothing major.

"Nothing to it but to do it," Tony said. "We put the replacement ball bearings inside the carriage, so it would roll again. We fabricated a little piece of metal to keep them in there. And it's back together and functioning. It was completed late that afternoon."

In case you hadn't heard, there have been some, uh, extravagant prices paid for rare typewriters lately.

The weekly "Antiques & Auction News" (July 9) told of an 1867 Danish machine, Malling Hansen's "ball," selling at auction in Cologne, Germany, for \$57,538. An Enigma cipher machine used by the Germans to communicate with each other in code during World War II went for \$20,460. And a Hammonia, an early German machine, brought \$19,179.

And who can forget the story of that Sholes and Glidden treadle carriage return Type Writer from 1873 bought by another Type-Ex favorite, Jim Rauen of San Jose, Calif., for \$21,000 about 10 years ago? This was after the "National Enquirer" located it in a farmer's house in the Midwest during a nationwide search for the nation's oldest operating typewriter.

Anyway, it was neat to see a serious typewriter historian and collector such as Tony Casillo finally succeed in parking a Ford in his museum. And I thought I had a great story.

But then Tony told me another yarn that was even more astounding. This was in 1992 when he was a novice collector, and spotted a Hall typewriter advertised in one of those antiques papers.

"I was very excited," he said. "I didn't own one." Quickly, he drove to the auction in



Massachusetts. "And there was another early typewriter there, a Franklin, that hadn't been advertised. There was also an Oliver, but I knew Olivers were common.

"Somewhere along the way," he said, "I tipped my hand: I registered, I was from New York, I didn't bid on anything the whole night until the typewriters came up.

"And when I started bidding on the Hall, I was so unsavvy, I didn't even wait. The auctioneer opened at like \$200, and I didn't even wait until he dropped down. I started bidding at \$250.

"And I guess the shills were smart enough to see that, and started bidding against me," Tony said. "They bid me up to \$450.

"At that time, that was a fair amount of money to pay for a typewriter, but it was an exceptionally high amount of money to the antique dealers who were just sitting there, who had dismissed it. They sat up and took notice: 'Hey, here's a guy bid \$450 on a typewriter!' In their minds, it was junk."

Tony Casillo knew it was worth \$450 and maybe more (Adler estimates the Hall is worth "up to four figures"). "With the commission, it came to \$495," Tony said. "But I didn't care."

The shill in the corner bid him up to \$450 on the Franklin, too, but Tony was happy to get it. "I'd never had one of those, either," he said.

He didn't care about the Oliver, so he went to pay for the Hall and the Franklin; he wanted to get on the road back to New York.

"And a woman grabbed me," he said, "and asked me if I collect typewriters. And I said I did, and she said she had a typewriter back at her shop, and it *had flowers on it.*"

Oh my. Tony knew it was either a decorated Sholes & Glidden, or a Crandall. She didn't even know the name of it.

"I tried to keep my cool," he said. "We exchanged business cards. I didn't even ask the price.

"Two days later, at the urging of my wife Linda, I called the shop. I got the woman's husband. He told me it was a Crandall. I asked how much they wanted for it. And he said \$125.

"And I asked if they would hold it for me, that I was planning a trip up there that weekend."

Tony chuckled.

"I didn't tell them *why* I was coming up," he said.

(If you need a clue, Adler says the Crandall is worth \$8,000 to \$10,000.)

That Sunday, Tony and Linda arrived at the shop in New Hampshire to bring home the treasure.

"The woman and her husband weren't there, but a worker was on duty," he said. "She said they usually give 10 per cent off on purchases, but I couldn't take it. Linda was amazed I didn't even haggle."

The story is a jewel. The \$10,000 Crandall for \$125 puts the \$15,400 Ford in perspective.

"I have to believe there is a God," Tony said. "Because it wouldn't have happened if they didn't bid me up on those other typewriters; otherwise, that woman would have never taken notice, and had the nerve to come over to me."

"Every once in awhile, you come out of it smelling like a rose. And every once in awhile, you have to pay the piper. That's the other side of the coin."



Jan. 4, 2000

Hey, Mike,

Here's the Klunker story. It would look good with a blown up version of that "GUTTER VOMIT" type that ETCetera featured in the last issue, heh heh. As always, edit at will. Or use ~~wherever~~ whenever!

Thanks alot for allowing me to use the Smith-Premier letterhead; enclosed please find a few copies for your own use. This was much appreciated.

Hope you had a Happy New Year, buddy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack", followed by a long, horizontal, wavy line that extends to the right.

Well, the new millennium rolled over, brothers and sisters, and nobody's computer shut down as feared (rats!).

Which means all that E-Diarrhea out there in Collectorland – over which typewriters were the Most Millennial – will continue ad nauseam. I hope all you insufferable gasbags gag on sharp barbs or drown in minutia!

Anyway, all the discussion of “Top 10 Typewriters of the Century,” etc., got me to thinking about all those “Bottom 10” types that have passed through my hands over the years ... beasts I refer to as Knarr's Klunkers.

So herewith please find a list of A Few Monsters That Belong at the Bottom of Boston Harbor:

1. *Royals with windows.* When I first began collecting, I was captivated by this simple, beautiful machine. In fact, I had a dream: Buy all I could find and store them in the basement, after which I would restore them and place each in antique shops everywhere, setting on fine furniture, to spark discussion and resale and wonderful profit!

Well, it never happened. You can still pick up these klunkers for a mere \$5. Some 79.75 BILLION of the bastards were made in the first place, you know. So their value will never go up, nobody wants them, and I'm stuck with 10 or 15 of them. And now I hate them.

2. *Silver and gray Olivetti office machines.* I think they're called Linea 98s, or some such, from the '70s. I once found a pile of 15 of these in pieces in a junkyard, and hauled home a couple of the best, to try to make one good one. But see, the rain had seeped into everything, and ...

3. *The Smith Corona.* About as special as



*Joe Smith and Bob Jones and Jane Doe at freaking Wal-Mart.*

4. L. C. Smiths. *I have another dream: Just once, actually heft up a serious, heavy sledge hammer, and take it to one of these miserable, mediocre lumps of iron. Packaging by Peter Principle. Paint by Olive Drab.*

5. IBM Model A, B, C. *These babies huff and puff and jump around like an old locomotive. But there's an Executive model out there somewhere with proportional Testimonial typeface that I would still kill for. (YOU take the rest!)*

6. Remington's copy of the Selectric. *The typewriter industry's Corvair or Ford Pinto: Quality, Job 326.*

7. Those IBM 50 60 Electronics. *A repairman's NIGHTMARE, just above the Composer.*

8. All those rusty, filthy Underwood No. 5s sitting in the dirt everywhere! *Yes, they typed good in the beginning, but they don't anymore, and they can't be cleaned up (save with a blowtorch), and every dumb flea market vendor thinks they're worth \$35, when they shouldn't bring 35 CENTS! (Ooooo, wait a minute, that one has a RIDGE around the bottom, and it says "Wagner Typewriter Company" on the back! — no no no, don't chuck that one in the Dumpster!)*

9. Every single machine with the word "Brothers" on it. *Klunk, klunk, klunk, I wanna see one of those road rolling machines take on a pile of these. Or give them all to Letterman.*

10. All portables, except for art-deco Royals and that Corona, and the silver-plated Royals, and maybe an Olympia or Facit or two. *Particularly that new pressed-steel junker still being, uh, assembled in Yugoslavia or Albania: Oh, good God, GET ME AN AXE!!!*

F. W. PRINCE, Representative.

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE COMPANY.

IMPROVE THE ORDER OF THE AGE



TELEPHONE 770"

308 MAIN STREET,  
BESSE PLACE, ROOMS 5 AND 6.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., June 9, 1899.

Feb. 12, 2000

Hey, Mike!

The issue turned out GREAT, good buddy! I feel guilty now, having practically twisted your arm to get my shir in ahead of other stories you had planned (sorry). But on the other hand, the newspaper deadline guy in me thinks it's good we have a little bit of immediacy regarding the Ford Internet story and the millennium bullshit. As I told you, you should have gone with a huge millennium issue back in December, just to satisfy us poor slob who still aren't trapped in that Internet swamp. By the way, did you ever print out or store any of that Top 10 stuff that hit the 'Net? If you did, I'd love to borrow and read some of what was put out there. (Again, I know you're very busy, so put that request on the back burner if you must!)

Thanks again for loaning me this great piece of stationary to copy, and for also assisting me in the inspection of my three vehicles! Cheapest goddamned inspections I ever had done! I slapped those babies on the hearse, bolted on the plate from my Capri, and headed out into the Piney countryside last Sunday to put on some miles, and test out the repaired (sic) power steering on the Caddy. Wouldn't you know, that in the space of a mere 65 miles of driving (in that loudly-muffled, noisy beast), I had three close encounters with automobiles driven by the N.J. State Police! Those bastards! My heart was up in my throat. I was sure I'd been nailed. Thank God they were busy going after other people. Man, if I would have gotten stopped by any trooper with just *half* a brain, they might have figured out that (1) the plates and stickers are to the wrong state, Pa.; (2) the stickers are copies, and that (3) I owe Philadelphia \$257 in parking fees and fines, and (4) didn't pay my taxes in 1999!!!

Now you can see why I'm nervous. I'm going to have to move to Antigua soon, pal. Thanks for assisting me in this awful life of crime!

*Jack*

PS - That little diner was great! If I lived where you lived, I'd be up there snacking all the time!



105 Spruce Lane  
Southampton Twp., NJ 08088-1751  
July 19, 2000

Hey, Mike!

I'm trying to save a buck or two on the telephone bill with this dispatch, having just coughed up \$400 to those miserable bastards. (I can only begin to imagine what *your* freaking bill is!) And at the same time I'm testing out another set of fonts for this wonderful IBM Composer-- Press Roman 11-pointers that I'd ignored because they weren't 12s, but that I see now are the Composer's closest match to the great old IBM Executive's Testimonial typeface! YES!

Anyway, I vaguely remember you asking me about a year ago if I had your copy of that rare book *Office Machine Technical Manual* by C. Leroy (Rocky) Jones. And I told you that I'd returned it to you after copying, which I had.

However, while digging down to the bottom of a huge pile of magazines on the bottom shelf of my desk, I came across the copy I made of that 180-page bastard. So if you still haven't located your copy, I'll make another copy of *this* copy! Let me know when you send my convention copy of *The Typewriter Exchange*.

What the hell's taking so long with that, anyway? (Yunk yunk yunk)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jack K.", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

PS -- God *damn*, this copy looks good! I might not need the Testimonial Executive fixed after all! (You were going to get to that next week, weren't you?)

Aug. 1, 2000

Dear Mad Dog,

Thanks for the Battleship.  
tin. The goddamned Post office  
clanked a dent in one side,  
the bastards. The wheel that  
sorts mail must have gotten  
snagged on the  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch step-up.  
Thank God it wasn't the next  
older Battleship tin I saw at  
Adamstown. Interesting though  
how they redesigned the old  
one into the one you sent. I  
might go up there again in a  
month or two (when I can  
afford it, heh heh), and try  
to steal that \$40 item for \$25,  
and display the two side by  
side in my cabinet.

It was also very interesting





105 Spruce Lane  
Southampton NJ 08088-1751  
Aug. 25, 2000

Hello, You Old Bastard!

After all the great old typewriter action this summer, now that it's over, I'm suffering a severe case of TYPEWRITER WITHDRAWAL! Heeeeeeellllpppp!!!

Ran into Richard Williger of Hamilton, N.J., at Lambertville last Sunday, & he said the last issue was great. He's the guy who finished last in the typing contest. We both spotted a Smith Corona fold-out portable with perfect decals, brushes, books, etc., for \$75, but neither bought. We thought we'd leave it for rich guys like you and Aubert.

A couple weeks back, I spotted a Hammond #2 at an auction in Spring City, but freaking Channel 6 put it on a preview story the night before-- an old general store had gone out of business-- and the one other guy who was interested bid me up to \$300, which was my limit, and beat me out of it. It was a nice original, uncleaned, perfect oak case, etc. Wish I'd had more money. Then again, I wish I'd bought some stuff at the convention. TAKE HOLD OF MY HAIR AND PULL THIS HEAD OUT OF MY ASS, MIKE!

One of the few purchases I made at the convention was a brochure for the colorful 1926-8 Royal portables. It set me back





all of \$5. Anyway, at the farm auction I attend Saturday mornings, guess what showed on the back of a wagon? That's right, the all-woodgrained version of that sweet little machine, and I was bidden up to \$2.50 before I begrudgingly grabbed it. Nobody bide on typewriters but me at these things, so you can imagine how neat this looks. Mint, fresh roller, and you know, it's keys and action are loose and RIGHT! The work looks OK, what do you think? Now I've got the brochure and the machine. Sort of ironic that the machine actually cost half the brochure!

Anyway, I hope you've relaxed, and made a reacquaintance with your lovely old lady, and are enjoying this wonderful summer, old buddy.

*Jack/Kna*

P3 -- Aubert no longer calls at all; he really must be pissed. Have you had any contact? How is Tony recovering? Did you hear anything from the Backdoor Boys about Brimfield? Anything on the 'Net about their newsletter effort? ANY NEWS AT ALL? I demand a long typewritten letter! I know you can type! HOW'S JASON? H-E-L-L-O, N-A-N-C-Y!!!



KEY WEST GIRL

Mike -  
This vacation/travel  
stuff beats work  
every time! We  
watched a "street angel"  
painted all in white,  
voiceless, blow prayer  
kisses to people who  
donated \$1. She is said  
to make more than a  
doctor. So I threw her  
in the surf & washed  
her off.  
Mike



11-20-2000

HAPPY  
"WHO-LIDAYS"  
from the  
U.S. Postal Service



POST CARD

MIKE BROWN  
9131 Bustleton Ave,  
Philadelphia, PA.  
19115

Photo © Rickard Stockton



Sept. 6, 2000

Hey, Mike -

Here are copies of ads  
from that great Scribner's  
from February, 1893.

I was stunned to page  
through today, and see  
the 2d wonderful "The  
Typewriter Exchange" loop!

I seem to remember  
you asked me to send  
over something else as  
well, but I can't  
remember what it was.  
Let me know.

If you guys get to  
Brimfield, let me know.  
I'll be staying with an  
old reporter pal at  
146 Waverly Rd., North



Ink-Pen & Ink-Pen East

[www.ink-pen.com](http://www.ink-pen.com)

[sherrell@ink-pen.com](mailto:sherrell@ink-pen.com)

[joel@ink-pen.com](mailto:joel@ink-pen.com)





Andover, Mass. The phone at  
Mark Noyes's is 978-689-2781.  
I'll be there after the Monday  
Night football game, and  
probably on Tuesday + Weds. nights  
as I do Brimfield, if you  
haven't called. Hope you  
and Tony can get up for a  
few days - that would be  
fun. Let's go "bomb" the  
Backdoor Boys." What the  
hell was their big bomb,  
anyway?

Jack

Color pic of Ground Zero  
is from "9/11 Special  
Commemorative Edition, One  
Year Later, A Nation ~~that~~  
Remembers," published by  
American Media, Inc.



9-27-00

HEY MIKE!

Just a quick note as I leave town for the long weekend to let you know you did a GREAT JOB on the convention issue, old pal! It was just amazing. Where did you get all those pictures? Were they the ones you squeezed off on that cheesy little disposable camera? Or did Rich & Chuck come through with their stuff?

I bet you need a SOLID WEEK OF DEATH SLEEP to recover from this one! But it has to be the best convention issue ever put out anywhere! Christ, the people who couldn't make the convention GOT THERE ANYWAY!!!

I'd send you some money, buddy, except the only way I can buy this VW convertible is by coming up with \$200 A WEEK for the next 13 weeks, while the dealer holds the freaking car! See me Nov. 1. That's when the 13 weeks are up, when I take delivery- when I come alive again!

Meanwhile, don't sell your house! Tell Nancy you'll reform!

*Jack*





JUNE 25, 01

Hey, Mike!

Thanks so much for this neat tin, old man. Here's a few bucks for your kindness. It is most appreciated. And listen, once again, if you have broken up a series of progress here in your A.P. Little display, and have lied to me about this tin being a second, you must tell me, & I shall return it. Isn't that what collecting is all about, displays?

THANKS. By the way, I'm going to try to do up a little article on the company -- tomorrow I shall send out queries to the public library research section, and also the biggest newspaper in Rochester -- with which we could run photos on the tin, plus the rare flat jobbie I got before. Boby has nothing on the company, so if I get anything, I'm going to do up another version of the story for him.

*Jack*

PS -- By the way, according to the index that Ribbon Tin News gave out at the convention, there's an article on A.P. Little in Typex, pages 192-3. Do you have that on file? Can you copy & send?

12-27-2000

Hey, Mike!

I'm finally getting my cards out- FOR NEXT YEAR!  
This year can't get any better than last year, unless you're  
planning another convention! Let me know when The  
Back-Door Boys are having their "jamboree" (wheee!) and  
we'll put the top down and head up there in my  
convertible!

Jack

---

Wishing You a Warm  
and Cozy Christmas





